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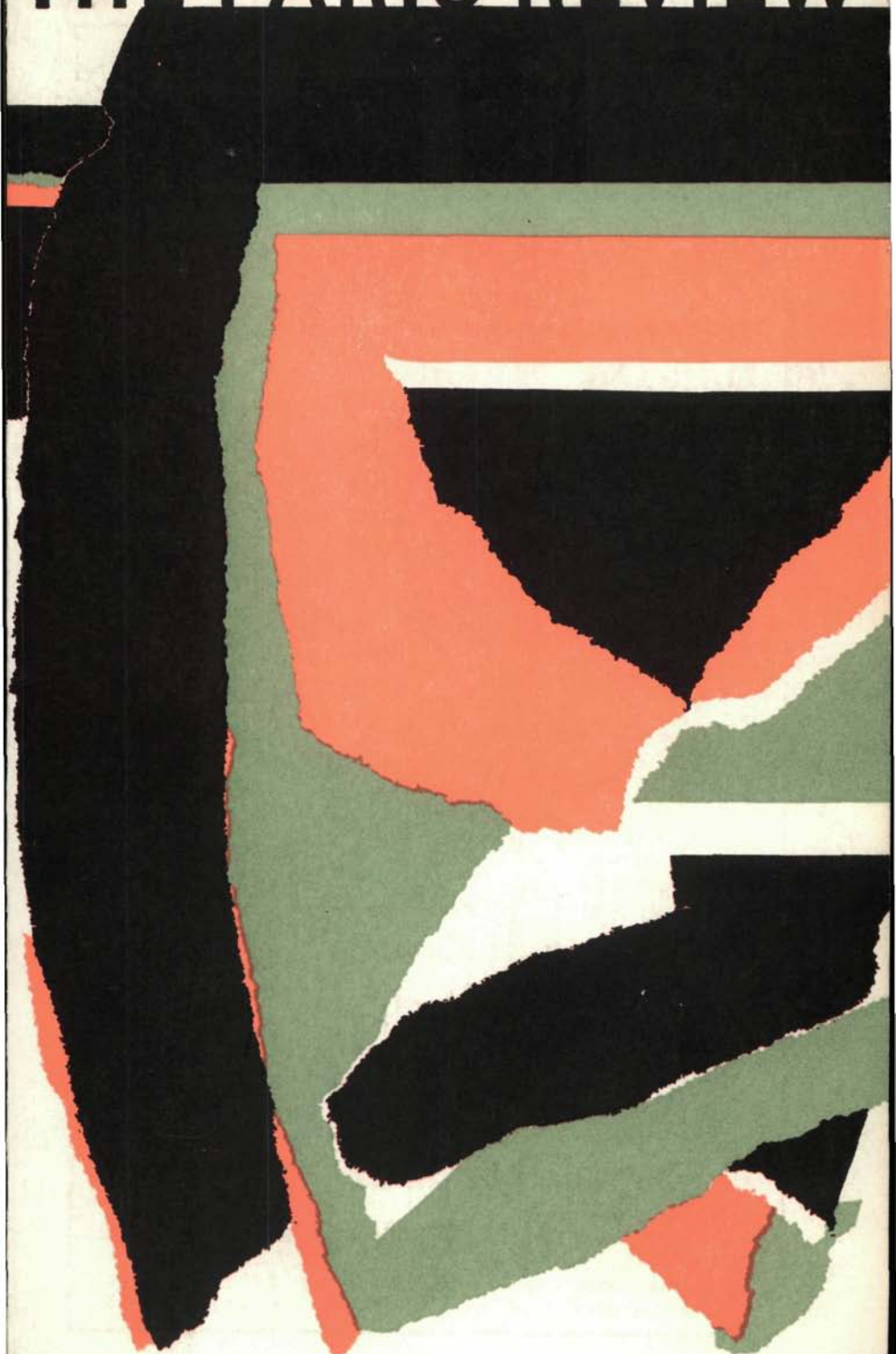

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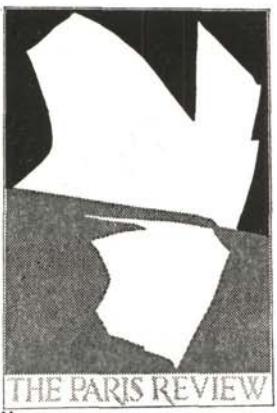

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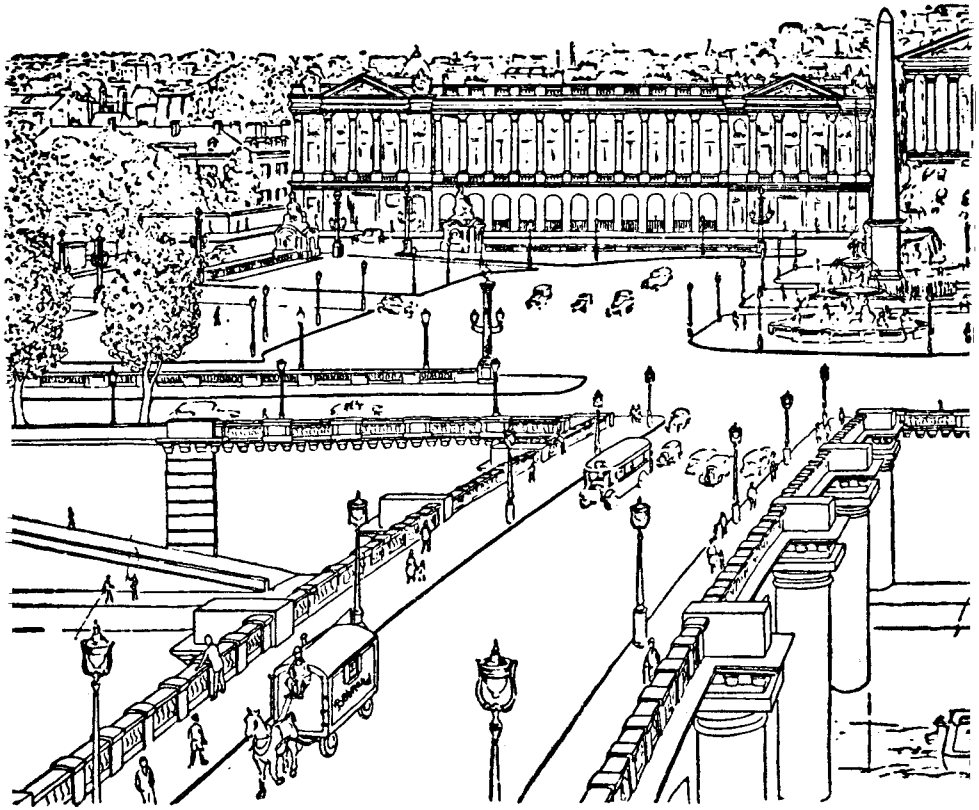

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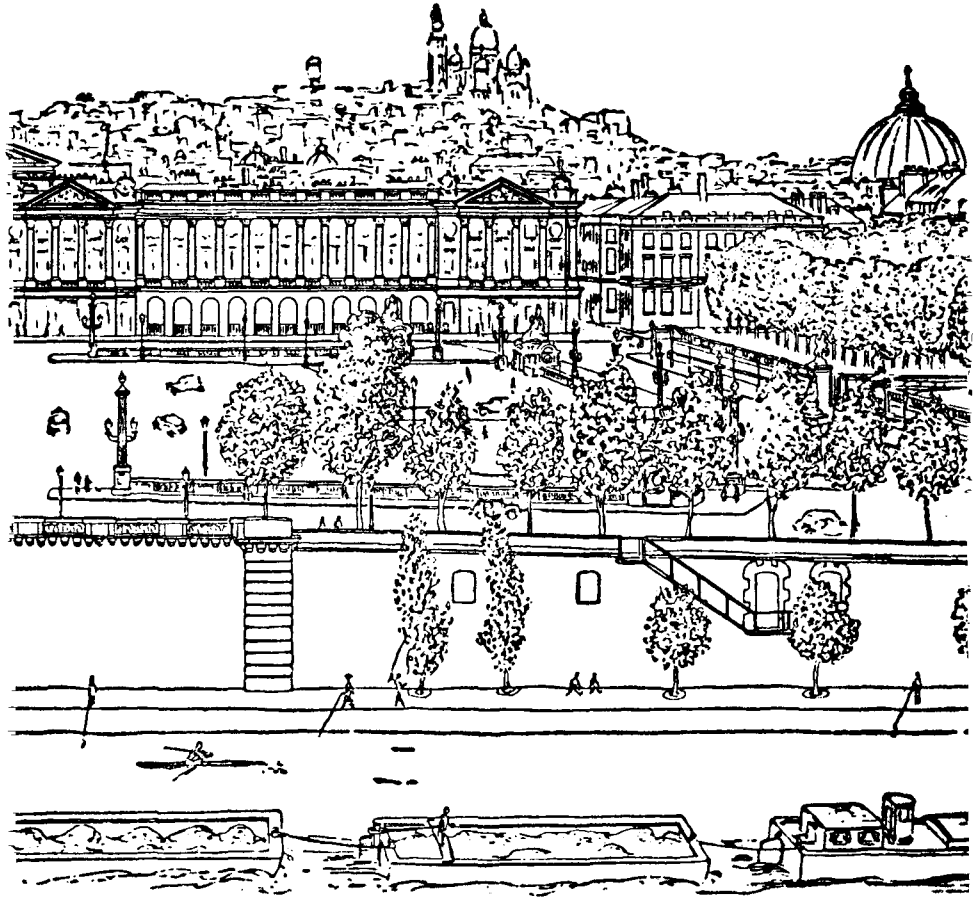

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The Scriptwriter

Evan S. Connell, Jr.

Koerner leaned against the glass wall of the booth and stared at the moonlight on Malibu beach while he listened to the telephone ringing.

Somebody picked up the receiver and a woman's voice said, "Yes?"

"Dana?"

"Who is this?"

"I'm calling Morris Reisling," he said because the woman did not sound like Dana. "Do I have the right number?"

"Who are you?"

"My name is William Koerner."

"It's you," she said. "Where are you?"

"On the highway near the ocean. Not far from the house."

He expected her to turn away from the telephone saying, "Morrie, Bill Koerner's here!" or "Morrie, guess who's calling!" And then Morris would be on the telephone asking if he remembered how to get there, saying the extra bedroom was waiting and there was a pot of chili on the stove.

"I suppose you remember how to get here," she said.

"I'll find it."

"Are you staying in Malibu, or just passing through?"

"I'm on the way to Mexico," Koerner said. It was not what he should be saying and not what Dana should have asked, though more than a year had gone by without a word from them. He wondered if they had been divorced.

"I look forward to seeing you," Dana said as though he was nothing but an acquaintance.

"How's Morris?"

"Morris is dead."

After a few moments Koerner said, "I didn't know that."

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"I realize you didn't. I'll look forward to seeing you. Goodby." Then she had hung up.

Koerner walked across the highway to his car and started driving slowly toward the house where he had spent so many nights. The house with the two people in it had meant as much as almost anything he knew, but now he did not want to see it again.

Several minutes later he coasted to a stop in front of another telephone booth and sat for a while without moving, but then continued on the highway and presently turned into a canyon. The night was warm and a deer sprang over the road, bursting through the headlights like an image on a movie screen. Going up the hill the lights followed a furry shape lumbering along, probably a small brown bear, which soon disappeared among the trees. Koerner put his head out the window to smell the pines. All of this he could remember and he had wanted to experience it again, but now none of it was pleasant.

Morris is dead, Morris is dead, he thought. Yet it might be a joke. They both were there when I called and Morris decided to give me a scare. Or he's working on a script and needs to know how people react to shocking news. He could do that because he uses people. He's experimented on me before, but it never hurt like this.

Dana was alone, wearing the ragged sweatshirt, dungarees and sandals. She shook hands calmly and then asked what he wanted to drink. After that she sat down on the hassock where she always used to sit and listen while they talked; and she asked how he was, and Koerner wondered how soon he could leave.

"You were suspicious on the telephone," he said.

"I've become afraid of the telephone. There were so many bad calls after it happened. Anonymous obscene calls at night. I began to hate people. I can't pick up the receiver anymore without being frightened. But that doesn't concern you. I suppose you want to hear about Morris. He died a year ago September. It was in quite a few papers. Not as many as I expected, but quite a few."

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Koerner remembered that Morris was overweight and at times his breathing sounded like a locomotive.

"Did he have a heart attack?"

"No."

"An accident?"

"Not an accident."

Koerner wondered if she expected him to guess again.

"Morris was murdered."

He realized that instead of being shocked he was annoyed. She had deliberately tried to shock him. Morris, who had been his friend and her husband, was dead and she had played a scene. He tried to excuse her because she had been an actress.

"Nor do I mean it figuratively," Dana said, looking at him with one eyebrow lifted.

Then he understood that she was playing not a scene but a role, and had been playing it ever since Morris died. Her questions on the telephone, the remoteness and the artifice, shaking hands instead of throwing her arms around him, forcing him to ask about what had happened.

"Morris was shot."

Koerner knew she would go on with it. He had done his part, now it was her turn. How many times had she behaved like this? Since Morris died how many friends had driven up the canyon road to the light burning above the door like a backstage entrance? Dana there to greet them with both hands outstretched, the palms turned down, perhaps, if the visitors were movie people, or if she happened to feel that way. Now she was sitting on the leather hassock as indifferently as a cat.

Suddenly she glanced up and said, "I know who did it."

Koerner hoped the exasperation he felt did not show on his face. She had resorted to acting because she had been hurt, and knowing this he knew he would not get angry, but still he wished she would stop.

"Actually there's no mystery. The man was tried for what he did and acquitted. He's walking around free today. He's a film cutter named Huggins. Poor little man. Morris was shot to death by a little film cutter. What do you think of that?"

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Koerner said, "This isn't what I asked for. Please, Dana."

"It happened in a cheap motel on the beach. Morris was in bed with the film cutter's wife. It seems that Huggins suspected his wife was having an affair so he hired a private detective. The detective found them together one afternoon when Morris had told me he was going to the studio. The detective did something that is not ethical. He told Huggins exactly where they were, with the result that the man left the studio and took a taxi to the motel. He was not supposed to be in possession of a gun because he was an ex-convict, nevertheless he had one. He proceeded to kick open the door of the cottage and begin shooting. He shot Morris only once, but he shot his wife seven times. Both of them were naked. She was very fat. Isn't it amusing?"

"Not to me," Koerner said.

"I realize that."

"Dana," Koerner said, and waited until she would look at him, "I'm not the enemy."

"You wanted to hear about it. I'm simply telling you. The man's wife died immediately. Morris lingered for nearly three weeks and for most of those three weeks I was at the hospital. He died in agony. His stomach was bloated like a sausage. I knew he was going to die. I knew before the doctors knew. I knew it even when they told me he was going to recover. Morris didn't believe them either, although he would nod his head when they told him. Do you know what he said to me one morning? He said 'It was a roll in the hay.' That's all the affair meant to him. Don't you find it amusing? People we know aren't murdered, are they? Gangsters are murdered and South American generals are murdered and occasionally a Brooklyn grocer is murdered by a boy who was trying to rob the cash register, but people you and I know aren't murdered, are they? Are they, Bill?"

Without any expression or any tears she was crying.

Koerner looked at the row of framed certificates on the brick wall above the fireplace and said, "Did he get another one?"

"Two since you were here. The one at the end is from a

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Brussels festival. He was killed before the awards were announced. Everything seems like such a waste."

Then she talked about it some more, and finally played a record of songs from a new musical comedy which was very popular, and before midnight Koerner was driving out of the canyon. He had hoped when he telephoned to find them both at home and if that had been so they would have insisted that he stay with them. He had hoped this is how it would be. Next, after learning that Morris was dead, he expected Dana would invite him to stay overnight in the guest room; but she had not offered and after a little while he would have refused. He thought then that he would stay at some place near the beach and perhaps go for a swim during the middle of the night as he and Morris used to do. But when he turned out of the canyon onto the Malibu road he did not slow down. From that house something was seeping like a poison and he felt it staining everything for miles in all directions. Whatever he looked at became disagreeable—the trees, the beach, the moonlight on the water—and the ocean wind had a foul odor.

Morris died without speaking, she had said, but he knew what was happening because he put on his glasses. Those horn-rimmed glasses, Koerner thought, mounted like a machine gun on that enormous nose. How could he meet Death without being able to see its visage? And he had died because of a lapse of taste, as well as poor judgment; died in a hospital, a setting he had used more than once in his scenarios, with a white plastic tube curling from his intestines into a pail beneath the bed, wagging his head slowly from side to side because he believed none of it.

She was sitting beside the bed when Death finally got around to his room. She had been reading a magazine when she knew Death was in, and quit reading and turned the magazine over on her lap and looked at her husband. Everything had been done for him that could be done, so with no particular surprise, and not much sorrow, she observed the meeting. She had loved him but her esteem for him disappeared when he was shot. He had been caught so stupidly. She had respected his intelligence, it had been the foundation

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of her love for him. They had lived together sixteen years and she had admired him even when she felt critical of things he did or said. But then one afternoon he was caught in bed with an overweight tramp in a roadside motel. He was caught like a foolish sailor. The stupidity of it disturbed her; three weeks she spent reading magazines and watching him suffer, and she began to feel insulted. She had selected as her husband a man who turned out to be a fool. She could not forgive him this. She might have forgiven his poor taste, because that was a thing men were often guilty of, but she could not forget or forgive his stupidity. She would have taken him back if he had believed he was in love with the woman, because men are easily confused; often they think they are in love when a woman knows it is only the body that absorbs them. If Morris had believed he was in love there would have been some dignity to the affair, at least there would have been that if nothing more. But he knew he was not. Or she might have overlooked it if the woman had been beautiful, but she was not. She was fat and ordinary, while he was a superior man. So she had quit reading that afternoon and dispassionately watched while Death strangled him, sorry that he was in such pain but otherwise not caring.

I never dreamed he would plot against me, she had said. I knew he plotted against other people, but not against me. Not in my wildest dreams. Not against me. As long as we were married I never once considered another man.

Then she attempted to explain something, which Koerner understood easily enough, although she was not sure she had made it clear. It was how she had observed herself, Dana, observing her husband's death. Did that make sense? Morris used to observe himself, many times she had noticed him doing it, and from him she had gotten the habit. He used it professionally. He would step outside of himself and stand distinctly to one side observing Morris. In fact he made notes of his own behavior, she said, and later in one of the scenarios she would read what he had discovered about himself. Was this clear?

Yes, Koerner said, because he too had seen it.

As he was dying, Dana said, I did what he had taught me.

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I stood far away. I could see him suffering from where I was, and I was curious to learn what would happen next. As though my husband was the subject of a script. How could I be like that? Do you know?

She did not expect an answer. Koerner was looking at her and noticed how neatly her brown hair was parted and how carefully she had plaited it and closed the long braid hanging down her back with a rubber band.

Really, she said, it's a shame he never knew. He had such a sense of humor. He would have loved that touch of irony, and probably would have found a way to use it. He was so clever. But he was occupied with himself during those last few minutes. He didn't pay any attention to me. And there were other touches which were terribly reminiscent of his scenarios. He always employed at least one scene of violence —shots, screams, a door slammed, the sound of running feet. Imagine him doing the motel. The woman shrieking and collapsing on the bed while her husband was firing shot after shot into that enormous body. She was quite dead when the police arrived. She must have been as bloody as a Spanish crucifix. Morris would have enjoyed writing it, if he had lived. People used to say he was a genius. He wasn't, as we both know, but he was awfully smart. Isn't it amusing that he was shot to death by a nobody?

That doesn't amuse me either, Koerner had said.

Then he stood up and she walked with him to the door where they said good-by. She seemed to know he would not come back again. She was not blaming him for this. She had discovered within herself certain thoughts and feelings that she had never known existed, and no doubt the same was true of everyone.

The light still burned above the door when Koerner turned the car around and started through the canyon.

Halfway to Mexico he took one hand off the wheel, pointed a finger at the moon and said while wiggling his thumb: "Pok pok pok pok!" the way Morris used to do when reading one of his scripts aloud, as though by such a gesture he might get rid of the disgust and the oppression, but the moon would not fall into the sea.

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Ron Padgett

Crazy Otto

Tonight the
light is
right
on the angle of the
imagination

by whose grace

I imagine

but the direct object is crosshatched

as it hits the proverb

ageing alongside the

primrose path

you walk along whistling
very nonchalant

hands in overalls

sky yellow

over rows of radios

leading to Crystal City. . . .

There,

at Chrysler City everything is sparkles

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driving wild by

wild magnetos

whose wires lead to the figure 8

behind which a dank but not lonely

Gutzon Borglum sits saying over and over

I—Love—You

only he says it in a tone of voice which implies that it is not he who loves you

and, well

Blue turns to gray

If the rate is being increased to increase its heart rate, each time the rate rises above a preset level, the animal immediately receives his first electricity.
At first, large increases in rate get some electricity. As the rate begins to catch up, progressively larger increases are needed to detonate the device

needed to detonate the device
Out on the breezeway

which gives continually onto

Great Smoking Mountains

a young man in suede

stares at a tangerine

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The natives of Tangiers
are referred to as
Tangerines

tears
come from
behind his eyes and
spread in white sheets until they
spill over onto my cheekbones
down which they
stream leaving a
glistening
trail

a tiny panda runs down

The thin but swift winds in the upper layers of the breezeway tugged on the trail at various levels. From a straight line it became a question mark and finally,

your smile is not the thing lips make

It's a spiritual condition risen at the edges

dreams, neither technicolor nor black & white

Light

a ray of light

a ray of light from the star Arcturus

must travel fo— forty years

before it hits us. The rays of light that launched the spectacular lighting display at the opening of the World's

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Fair of 1933 had left Arcturus forty years before—when the
a slow, blooming orgasm
Chicago World's Fair closed in 1893

Capital letters

come out suggests orgasm
too much
and slide up the runway

into the sky

All the SKY is gray

your edges break off and fly away

dip missing

the great heavy cables which rise

above my attention span

and the... ...

...for going downstairs backward
is certainly not the same as going upstairs forward
and going sideways spinning

upward through clouds

rolling

Rolling n rolling

Progressively larger increases...

I **Love** You

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each word increases squared

by the word before and the word after

Because you spoke to me in words

with an English countryside on
one side of them and

a televised stilt

on the other

Sonja Henie was born in Oslo, Norway

her body goes back and starts all over
on the end of your body

whose sunrise

glows in the dark

It is morning dark
rain etc I am out running
down the great dotted line

to born in Oslo, Norway, in 1913
and almost immediately put on ice skates by
her father, Wilhelm, a shopkeeper and European
cycling star

Wilhelm

peddling his 100 per cent. chrome flying piano

I can't get through to him He

is a foreigner

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and you can't get through to a foreigner

by simply speaking your own language

slower and more clearly

You have to speak his language: in this case a vertical line

looks longer than a horizontal line

of equal length

&

— — — — —

Sooner or later all the clichés come true
They just wait around
Until truth catches up with them
They are not exactly untrue
They are only waiting for truth;
For instance, the idea that sooner or later all
The clichés come true
—expressed above—
Strikes me as not yet being true

and if and when

like Borglum

I say like Borglum I Love You

if it isn't true it will be

as soon as the sodium

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is released at elevations above 50 miles

where it glows

under the action of sunlight after the sun has set
on the earth's surface below

and as soon as it is

I'll be down there

on the earth's surface

capped by the bright soaring light

of the truth

gradually coming true

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Tom Clark

Things About You

I

I write this for your eyes and ears and heart
If it makes your eyes sore
ears weary
and heart burn
Stop!

I come to things about you
I didn't use to understand

I didn't mean to use you
I just summoned you

Then at the end you are soft and bent
The way a tulip is droopy a lilac is not

knowing this
is a joyous experience
for me
gives you endless pleasure

You are casual when the others are only easy

You go directly toward your own thought

There are some things about you I don't understand

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that's why I married you

Do you think these are banal thoughts?

that IS what it's all about
the portrait for instance
of the *inside* of the surface of something

The way *You Didn't Even Try* is "about"

Do out and in exist?

and up and down
are lies about them

2

Did you say something?

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Recording Test Poem

Everything turns into tape. It (check one)
puts the multiples on a loop (1)
reduces all numbers to one (2)
or raises them to the infinite (3)

Did you check two (2) of the above? Why?

Noon. Random signals of varying intensity go pop!
together
creating WHITE NOISE
at this "point"

1 = the unit which they share
$\frac{1}{2}$ = the width of the tape in inches
2 = the number of possible directions
$3\frac{3}{4}$, $7\frac{1}{2}$ = the speed in inches per second

ERRORS IN RECORDING:
The tape gets twisted into 56 kinds of
Backward/forward Riemannian fuckup torques,
10-thumbed Disney-pig haircurler ringtails
All caused by dumb mistakes in sorting.
How do you tell direction in space
From direction in time with your *fingers*?

Tape goes forward, time goes forward
Tape goes backward, time goes where?
Who knows where the time goes?
Maybe into Tape Storage?

CONTINUOUS TIME/TAPE BANKS

If I can save you
any time come on (sings)
give it to me I'll
keep it with mine

I mean:

MERRY-GO-ROUNDS!

and firecracker wheels of peakless soaring suns.

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Sonnet: Against Entropy

It is a loose sleeve whose hair wraps the
Bedouin on his pony and then slings him
Into the wind, always to be a monad
In the tango of his pleasures that are
Swifter than the words of his pursuers
Who curse the sand because their stings
Are as undifferentiated and soft as birds'

The track of the arrow through the feathers
That's what will is, to be floating there
In the smoke of the wreckage, and the burning leaves
Release their brown numbers to the air
That ascends across us into the future, like tones
That detach themselves from the harmonic
Of the planet as it screeches back into the past

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Jim Dine

American Street

I enter a shop and see girls playing cards
the girls wear flaming red dresses
the kind you find in the theater
all this time I am shaking
the kind you find in the theater
I leave the shop and piss in my pants
a girl stands looking at me
she's red and fat and I gasp at her tits
now she's showing me her teeth

I just saw a guy walking down the street
he was with a little girl
they stopped now and then
and he lightly beat her with a thread

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The Workbench

1. hammer
2. nails
3. glue
4. screwdriver
5. ruler
6. scenes
7. drill
8. plyers
9. file
10. nicely

Thor and Formica are each in their own special way
winning the war for our boys, that crazy gang from Avondale

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Facts in 1969

making a long painting using all sorts of painting
techniques I'm making a long painting using all sorts of painting
techniques paint staining with all kinds of plastic paint washy oil
watercolors (German intense dyes)
big color arenas hard thin lines damar varnished glazed parts
"THAT SPRAY CAN" colors wiped on with a rag with my hand
not an abstract painting but a diagram pieces of paint colors
maybe labels maybe not
Kitaj is jewish unbeleeeeevable Kitaj is jewish
a kike
boy now a jewisher
making a long painting made of little paintings each one is 6 × 8 inches
going all in a line all 60 of them up the wall around the doors down
the stairs thru the door and shake hands
Kitaj is jewish
rocks arranged like a heart
made of feathers

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Bean

a roach that had been traveling with me since Milan
crawled up by my bed for the last time I had the arriving and
leaving jealousies
you are a diamond
shining from every cut
on the wall in shadow form like Bobby's twig alphabet
I cant allow you 9 days of freedom in my mind like sand
I was thinking about you today on my bed as the ship wiggled
I thought my teeth would explode
but you brought something for both of us
and we sat on the ground and ate it together

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Jim Carroll

Heroin

Sat for three days in a white room
a tiny truck of white flowers
was driving through the empty window
to warn off your neighbors
and their miniature flashlights.

by afternoon
across the lake
a blind sportsman had lost his canoe.
He swam,
by evening
toward the paper cup
of my hand.

At dawn,
clever housewives tow my Dutch kitchen
across the lawn.
and in the mail a tiny circus
filled with ponies
had arrived.

You,
a woman with feathers
have come so often lately
under my rubber veranda,
that I'm tearing apart all those tactless warnings
embroidered across your forehead.

Marc,
I'm beginning to see those sounds
that I never even thought
I would hear.

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Over there a door is knocking
for example
with someone you hate.
and here I beg another to possess somehow
the warmth of these wooden eyes

so beside me
a lightbulb is revolving
wall to wall,
a reminder of the great sun
which had otherwise completely collapsed
down to the sore toe of the white universe.

its chalky light
rings
like a garden of tiny vegetables
to gather the quiet of these wet feelings
together

once again

like the sound of a watch
on your cold white wrist
which is reaching for a particular moment
to reoccur...

which is here... now.

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The Birth and Death of the Sun

Now the trees tempt
the young girl below them

each moves off the other's wind
endlessly, as stars from the earth,

stars from the stars.

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One Sunday in Spain: A condensation of a longer life

John Deck

I. The knocker sounds once. The knocker is of brass, a cast hand, distinctly feminine, grasping a ball which, at rest, leans against a plate bolted to the door. Flipping it up and letting it fall of its own weight fills the house with an explosive crash.

Millie jumps. She stands still in the kitchen, hears her husband's feet whisper overhead, as he treads lightly to the front balcony. A shutter squeaks open.

"Damn." She is making coffee.

"Mill-*lay*?"

She goes to the foot of the stairs. Andrew Devlin stands at the top, wearing undershorts. He is not a sleek man, and wastes little time in the sun. Furthermore, the patches of fur on his body are bleached a dull grey. She is astonished to see this. Then she smells orange blossoms. *Pulvos higienicos*, his favorite talc.

"That was Mooney."

"So?"

"You're meeting him on the beach? He had his towel."

"If he goes to the same beach, and I see him and he sees me, and we want to talk, then we'll meet."

"I don't want you screwing around while I'm gone. I've told you that."

"You have. And I ignore it. I ignore you. You drunk. Crying and banging your fists on the wall. And screaming in the middle of the night. Calling me whore. *Cr*ying! Don't tell me how to act, Andy. Don't tell me anything. Don't *talk* to me. You look awful in that powder. And your face looks boiled."

He disappears quickly through a doorway, into their bedroom.

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II. Dressed now, in a tweed coat, dark jeans, and new Spanish boots, Andrew is not greatly improved. He has spent several minutes angling that blue beret, knotting the silk scarf around his neck, getting the lenses of his dark glasses clean. He has oiled and combed his beard. He sits astride a Lambretta, parked before the door, checking his wallet for passport and money with very shaky hands. (Those small sores on the fingers? Burns. He doesn't smoke well when he drinks.) His eyes, behind the glasses, have a pulpy look about them, as if they'd been stepped on. He is tired.

"You've got to eat. I've got rolls heated."

"As you have said, time after time, I'm getting wine fat. I'll pass the rolls."

"Have you your other glasses?"

"I don't need them." He kicks the starter.

"Where are they? I'll get them."

"Don't need them." The engine catches. He smiles. He is somewhat concerned with the spectacle they make on Calle Franco at this hour. Only women coming late to mass, and a few men who have been out in the *campo* scratching at family gardens, are present to form opinions. Still, Andrew is sensitive.

"Don't be an ass. You'll wreck if you can't see."

"No. Don't worry about me. Take care of yourself."

"If you are worried, you can go to the beach with me."

"No."

"Well, let me get your glasses."

No. Again. He nudges the scooter off the stand, engine idling, warming up, and coasts down Calle Franco.

It's the last time they'll part in this world.

III. Millie finds the clear glasses minutes later. She looks over his room occasionally, when he's off somewhere, for the bulls or drink. He has a desk covered with notes and pieces of manuscript and books. There are dozens of ball-point pens and bound notebooks. There are coffee cups and ashtrays. He is engaged in writing a dissertation on the modern theater, its origins and inclinations. (Tentative title: *Hamlet is Dead.*)

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But if one is half as shrewd as Millie, one will find in this scholarly disorder signals of Personal Chaos. Dead moths and cigarette ash, struck-through paragraphs on pages of fair copy, marginal notes such as Shit! and Presumptuous! And street dust, a thin coating, over all. What does he do in here, day after day, while she's at her leisure with a vengeance?

The glasses are under notes toward his bold: *Introduction*: Horatio Mounts the Stage. Here Andrew Devlin speaks through the suicidal king-maker Horatio, the good man who must live and proclaim Fortinbras king. What does Horatio think of kings and countries at this point? Andrew is struggling to discover. He has written in a margin: Rethink that beginning line: "I couldn't carry him. Too heavy and too wet with death." He has tried: "If I wish to die and must live, and he loved life and died, who is left to speak here? Were his instructions his or a dying man's? And can I, a dead man, be trusted to utter what I did not—could not—hear?"

There are a dozen possible openings.

Millie doesn't read them now. Instead, she finds Andrew's glasses, in their case, the right lens only half there, cracked down the center, ruined.

Andrew, two nights before, and a bit tight, tried a handstand in the hall. No luck. And glasses are of no use in a handstand.

Millie places them—but not the case—on the table in the dining room. She wants them out in the open for her husband's return.

IV. He encounters the first omen. Jen Mooney, with her two sons, is out for a walk this morning.

"You look beautiful," she says, and she means it. "Look at him boys."

She is very tall and handsome; the boys are handsome; the three beam at Devlin. They make him feel wretched.

"Going in to see the bulls?"

"Yes. Come along."

"Can't. They've still got colds. Millie at the beach?"

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"No. She's home. She'll go later."

"They are meeting, you know."

None of the men lingering before the Costa del Sol, and none of the people crossing the highway to catch a bus for Málaga, and certainly not the bearded drunk who serves as a porter can understand a word she says. Yet Devlin looks down the incline to the river bed, and beyond it to the fields of cane, with a certain longing.

"I trust Millie."

"You said differently the other night. When you were drunk." She shrugs.

He shrugs. Because he was...

"Your house will be empty all day."

"So are the fields around here."

"But if you stayed here, with them?"

"No." He says that forcefully enough. She accepts it. She tightens her grip on the boys and that's almost it.

Not quite. When he goes by her, he is a bit awkward. He nods as he passes and—Goddamn!—the glasses slide down his nose. He reaches for them. *Id*iot! The scooter veers into midlane. He catches it before the oncoming bus...but if...

"Careful!" Jen screams.

He shrugs, unable to look back, and accelerates. Down the curve to the bridge, over the lumpy bridge, out across the countryside. The wind at his jacket; the cane leaves scrapping at the edge of the road. A little breeze. In the ring, wind is disaster.

V. She takes another coffee under an umbrella at Bar Alhambra. She is demonstrating a lack of compulsion. Then, just for a while, she strolls up and down the plaza, peering over one side at Calehonda beach. Nets dry there; fishermen sleep in the shadows of their boats, fully clad, flies at lip and nostril.

She partakes of the natural beauty; the sweep of coast toward Motril with its towers and winking rocks, and the blue Sierra Almijara. Phoenicians, Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Visigoths, Moors—all loved Andalusia. Who would

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not? Winter is unknown on the Costa del Sol, where the mean temperature is 54° F., while in the summer, cool sea breezes maintain a pleasant 70° F. Swimming year round. Come for fun.

The plaza ends in the surf, but above it, for it is on a rocky shelf said to have founded a Moorish castle. The *ayuntamiento* is on one side of the square; the bars Alhambra (for the rough trade and permanent guests) and Marisol (posh, complete with Scopitone and clean-shaven lazzorone) face it. Date palms run out to the end of the square on one side, come back on the other.

This is where the *paseo* is held in the evening.

VI. Devlin does not stop in Torre del Mar, at the bar of Pepe, fattest bar owner in the area, because he is too late already. Damn near noon. And he has to see something, to justify this early departure.

Also he is wary of Pepe, who is a friend when the bar is empty save for Andrew, and a smug, silent pig when there are fishermen at the bar, drinking, eyeing the bold *extranjero* in a fly-benighted looking glass.

VII. Behind the church a smaller square and, leading off that, a narrow way between two-storey residences. Lingering here, at play on the air, are the stench of sewage and radio music. She walks through *cante hondo*, a thin falsetto voice delivering intricacies of woe. The doorways are draped. The wind blows back the drapes on marble tile and cats, asleep on cool stone.

There is a turnoff to a walled lane where dirt floor, rotting walls, and the strenuous sun exchange potentials like elements in an electron tube. (She dampens quickly; her things grow moist.)

The wall ends on a blasted sugar mill. A *burro* with festered eyes grazes the ruined garden. Beyond the mill's yard Millie descends to the beach on a spine of rock, treacherous with fresh donkey droppings, falling away steeply to a tomato field. The field and the sand are separated by a canebrake and, through it, one sees the white sand. She goes down, a ginger-

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ly but sure-footed young woman in new, blue *alpargatas*, a printed orange dress without sleeves. Her hair is braided and bounces its final pennant just above her buttocks.

As she jumps down into sand at the base of the rock, Clement Mooney, the noted young Irish author, raises himself from his towel and darts toward her. The trot is no small tribute; it's hot.

"You look like the queen of the gypsies."

"I am."

He takes her basket. They are the only bathers on the beach.

VIII. Phoenicians, Greeks, Visigoths, Moors...

Andrew Devlin scoots the fertile coast, scarf-end popping near his ears, sorry he has not eaten.

The bulls excite him but so does hunger. As he drives he kills his share of bugs, gathering them up in the thick folds of his jacket. They splash into the tweed; dry an instant later; and the wings and hard shells blow away. A few hit him in the face and sting. Let them choose another hour for crossing the highway. They endanger him. Let them die.

He regrets nothing. He leaves his wife to herself. I must be alone, he thinks. "Hamlet is Dead" roars in his ears, roars like the wind when he is traveling, and roars in silence when he is not.

I cannot save what I cannot claim. The hero died quoting his best, most accurate poetry. I am here, measuring what devotion I have left, uneager to squander it on another person.

I may participate but I will not believe.

IX. She changes under a towel, one of many liberties the guests allow themselves. It is a process which requires squirming, a show of silken gear, some late adjustments. Mr. Mooney, watching intently, decides he would do well to swim when it is over.

Then they lie, side by side, on spread towels, sweating. He reads. She watches fireworks swarm on the backs of her eyelids, thinking of Mooney, who had to go swimming. He

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has his hair cut by his wife because he cannot look in a barber's mirror, his beard clipped and shaped—a vain beard. He is lean, without excess though not muscular, coppery colored except for the freckles, which are caramel colored. He has the most remarkable nose. Quite long, very straight and thin. Blood seems to collect in it, near the bottom, just enough to tinge it pink. Once it is established that he does not suffer from a protracted respiratory ailment, his nose becomes quite an attractive feature. Very delicate. Like a rabbit's. Nostrils that seem to pout at times; at other times to flare joyously.

"We could go to your house for a while."

"We couldn't. Everyone in town knows Andy has gone to Málaga."

"Let me remind you that these people are here to provide a backdrop before which we dawdle, lasciviously."

"You are a snob bastard."

"I am a poor bastard, strongly taken by your principal parts."

He knows nothing of these parts, as yet. The closest to them he comes is just now, when she hands him the blue plastic bottle. He squeezes the bottle; there is a spitting sound.

"Curds. Concupiscent curds, as your Mr. Stevens would have it. That famed, unanguished poet."

The lotion goes into her skin cold, heats up immediately. His fingertips tour her back, bumping the borders of the suit, lingering in the hollows under her arms. She giggles, turning over.

"Oh, you'll never be fat!" he says, and goes off to swim.

X. The *sorteo* is over; the bulls are safely stored now, under the arena, in dark boxes they will occupy for most of their last afternoons as bulls.

Andrew parks alongside the reeking public toilet just outside the corrals. He charges up the stairs, against the flow of late-leaving spectators. He jerks off the jacket—charnel house as he runs. The people coming down are troubled by his appearance. He is undaunted. He charges through mounds of swept-up peanut shells to the arches.

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Below him are the pens, divided by walls the tops of which are catwalks for animal handlers. A few men stand idly on the walls. One, that greying fellow in short sleeves who so resembles the late Hermann Goering, will appear this afternoon, pouchy in his suit of lights, as a peon in the fight. The rest, the remaining few, are unknown to Devlin. None of the young killers is present. And all the bulls that will perform that day are gone.

None of the certain doomed or the possibly doomed then. But, as has happened for the last two weeks, he does see one bull isolated in a pen where the steers are kept. This wild beast stands in mid-area, his face lifted so his short snout takes the sun evenly. Flies halo his head. Standing there, still as stone, but for the tail quirting the air above the befouled hips. A web of colorless slime depends from his nostrils. And facing that head, those sleepy eyes, are pale steers browsing the straw-and-dung floor of the pen for a bite of food, but watching their betesticled brother throughout the snack, warily.

Devlin views the single bull as a latter-day Shelley might remark his moon. Why did the beast remain here, week after week. Sick? Aged? Crippled in shipping? Is he a spare?

No. No simple answers.

He has either (a) so honored his kind that the crowd has spared him; or (b) he is so dangerous, such a crasher of gates and steer-mauler when the pressure's on that he has been quietly withdrawn; or (c) he is a fate-protected entity which, in each drawing, is left behind as a substitute for the coward; or (d) he is cowardly beyond redemption by insult or injury, less than a steer, an absolute disgrace, a male cow.

XI. The tip of the beach opposite the old mill ends on a point where an old tower has fallen to rubble and a new, small shack for the Guardia Civil has been erected. The point is connected to the mill by a path which goes behind the tomato patch.

Perhaps this is confusing. Suppose you are offshore one hundred yards, facing the beach. On your left, the broken

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stone walls and the new shack. Then the beach, three hundred yards, shaped like a quarter-moon. Then the rocks, the outcropping that Millie walked down, and the old mill. Directly behind the beach, and behind that thin fringe of cane, are the tomatoes. Behind the tomatoes, up a bit, for the tomato field was hollowed out by the sea, is the path, running parallel to the beach. Clear now?

Jen Mooney comes over the saddle next to the guard's shack, carrying the smaller boy. The other is ahead, sitting down at the top of a rocky slide; he bumps down on his rump.

"For the love of Jaysus, will you look at that?"

Millie smiles, for her eyes are closed and she has just turned toward him on the towel. She thinks he refers to her principal parts. But he trots off, kicking sand. He runs directly to the boy who slid and scoops him up. He carries the child up to the top, plants him beside the mother, and stands with his family. In very few minutes, in no time, really, Jen starts along the path to the mill, holding both boys by the hands. Very tall, she is, with the raincoat fanning behind her in the breeze.

Mr. Mooney does not return to the towel. He goes swimming. He swims out at an angle from the shore, and back at an angle to a spot even with Mrs. Devlin. The geometrical seducer. That swim took about ten seconds longer than Mrs. Mooney's walk behind the tomatoes to the mill, and beyond the mill to the walled lane. Out of sight.

XII. For every beer you drink across the street from the arena you get, free, three cold shrimp as *tapitas*. They are not large shrimp. But nine hold Andrew's hunger in check for his scooter ride into the city. He is thinking of *gambas al pil pil* at Bar Baleares. And that rarity on the south coast, draft beer, warm itself but served in cold steins.

There is something to be said for drinking in the afternoon. The imagination unfolds early. The common cigarette tastes better than ever. The bones of the skull, particularly those of the frontal wall, cool, or seem to cool, by several degrees and sometimes quiver pleasantly.

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Devlin stands at the bar, his feet in shrimp shucks, smoking his Celta, thinking of a little chapter on bullfighting. Or perhaps he could stitch bullfighting into chapter II, as yet unwritten, but beautifully entitled: "*Enter Giovanni with a heart upon his dagger.*" He is determined to make that the most important stage direction in history; to hell with the silly business of being chased by a bear.

XIII. "What did you tell her?"

"Take them away. The boys have been sick for weeks. Endless colds."

"She knows better than that. You shouldn't have sent her off."

"You are undone, huh?" He smiles, slaps water from himself. He does it to keep towels dry. "She knows a bit, and so does your husband. She mentioned it this morning, when she saw him going off. He almost killed himself after they spoke."

"He has no reason to worry."

"No. I suppose not. And she has no reason to come sneaking down the river bottom, bringing the boys through slime. Expects to find me with my incisors lodged in your thigh. Where they should be, mind you."

She has her eyes closed. When he places his big toe on her thigh, the sand's rough texture is tooth-like, and she leaps up. "Damn you!" she shouts.

But he is drying his face, and his towel covers his face, so she does not know if he is laughing. Or if he touched her on purpose.

"You are what is called, in the endless novels of sensitive American adolescents, a cock tease. Or a prick tease."

"Yes."

"And Andrew has nothing to worry about?"

"Nothing."

"Do you want me to leave?"

"No."

XIV. On Calle Larios, midway between the *paseo* and the Plaza Antonio, a club is located. Through broad windows of what might have been a department store, the stroller with

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an eye for curiosities will see, within, a seeming multitude of old men, seated in chairs of all conceivable shapes, and Andrew Devlin has decided that here, on this placid, prosperous street, are El Caudillo's chums, the castrating victors, killers of Lorca.

They are just men, but some are oddly dressed. Bars of light—sunlight broken by Venetian blinds—fall upon watch-fobs and stickpins, upon great tufts of black handkerchiefs, on small, black mourning flowers tucked in button holes, on hairpieces and gold-headed canes.

A *C* superimposed on an *M* mark it. On your right as you head toward the square.

XV. "I'm wrong. I have taken notes on you. You are not a tease. You are a nun in heat."

She says nothing.

"You know, they get a roving eye sometimes, the young ones. Particularly the school teachers. I think it's to scare up something for confession. 'He had tight trousers, Father, and his shins was hairy where they showed.' "

She forces back the smile.

"Are you writing now?"

"No. I make notes."

"About us, here."

"Don't worry. If it gets into print I'll disguise you."

"How?"

"I'll make you and your husband symbolic. I'll give you Jamesian names. Mr. and Mrs. Waterproof Bandage."

XVI. He goes to the Bar Baleares, orders beer and *gambas*, pays before he is served, then goes down the street to Bar Pombo, for Bar Baleares has no facilities.

Here he orders a small Soberano—milder and more popular locally than Fundador—and slaps a *duro* down on the bar. He goes back to the WC, relieves himself, returns, tips back the drink and leaves the change. He will not piss in one place, pay in another.

He returns to Bar Baleares, eats and drinks, orders a second

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beer, returns to Pombo, has cognac, returns to Baleares, more beer. So on.

XVII. She sleeps. He awakens her gently, by passing a hand over her face, blocking and unblocking the sun that strikes her eyelids.

"I'm sooo sleeeeeepy." She awakens. "And lazy. Got to swim."

"Give me your hand."

Led, she goes directly into the water, but he returns for her cap. Salt water dries out her hair; the ends split and frizzle. And she does not like to wash it often, for it is slow to dry. Important, here, is this: she did not mention the swimming cap. He recalled it, stopped her before she got wet.

They wade out until the water comes up to her waist. She tucks her hair under the rubber, and gasps as the warmth of sleep washes off. The wind makes the water seem cold.

"Did you dream?"

"No. *Yes.* But I can't remember what I dreamed."

"Tell me your dreams. I'll get them published. *The Darty Dreams of Millicent D.* 'I'm walkin' O'Connell street one recent mornin' when I meet a man with his member comin' straight out from the roof of his skull. So I says: "You should wear a hat, sir, and no question." So he says: "I tried it, ma'm. And, believe me, ma'm, it's a far greater shock when I doffs it."

She laughs long at that. And before she swims away she apologizes for being afraid. In the clearest statement of feelings she has made in the month Mooney has pursued her, she tells him this:

"I've been true to Andy when I haven't wanted to be. There was a man in California, where I worked. But I don't want to just give up. I've known you for a month and already I'm in trouble. It's trite, isn't it? The unemployed aliens abroad. I don't mean to tease. But I should be cautious."

"Mrs. Bandage thinks of the motives," Mooney says. "The motives and meanings. Do you know why I sent Jen away this morning, with her dear doe-eyes brimming? Because I

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feel something being around you I don't often feel. That's all. I want feeling."

"I know. So do I. But what I feel like is a lazy American bitch."

XVIII. Then the *bodegas* down by the public market, in the alleys, where he samples wines that are all too sweet. There are three grades of the Tears of Christ wine in one bar, for instance, and all three are too sweet.

He buys peanuts and fills his beret with them, then goes about with the beret on his head until he comes to a *bodega*. He enters, puts the beret on the bar, and makes it clear that all comers are welcome. There are few takers.

He could kill Mooney right now; he could knock hell out of Millie as well. Similar ideas come to him between small glasses of sweet wine. But he discredits these dreams. This to be said about Andrew Devlin: When his confidence creeps out and attempts to invent the spiritual equivalent of Chellean I in a matter of seconds, his intellect races out, leashes it up before it hurts anyone. Sixty-seven units beyond the B.A. and seldom will a phrase such as "heart in mouth" apply to him.

Still, he's happy now. And this is the euphoria for which he drinks. Not only can he beat Mooney hand to hand, but he could, and he just might, turn out a little book which would sink Mooney's boat artistically. A little work on the so-called despairing novel. Tentative title: *Up From the Wasteland.*

This, too: some small bug, perhaps a fly, gets into one of Andrew's glasses of wine. He will not complain or ask for another glass. And he is too tight to sip around the fly; and too mannerly to lift the intruder out with a fingertip. So he drinks it down. Very likely in swallowing he imagines that Sartre or Dostoevsky or Antonin Artaud would have done the same.

XIX. They are late because the wind blows the sound of the chimes away from the beach and they don't hear. Observe that no one wears a watch. They leave the beach. Both are

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sunburned and tired, and they have a fight. He wants to go to another bar, away from the plaza, because he wants her alone. He is carrying her basket.

She says she is still unable to sneak around as yet.

He says: "Don't accuse me of sneaking. I'm in hell's trouble with my family as it is."

She says she has heard of his past exploits (Mooney has lived in the village for over a year) and thinks Jen is probably accustomed to his adventures.

He says: "No one enjoys humiliation."

"Then you have been fooling around a lot?" She takes back her basket.

"For God's sake, will you remember you have not been here forever."

They are ready to part, he for his home, she for the square, when he grabs the basket from her, this time burning her palms with the ropes that serve as handles, and strikes off for the square.

She has triumphed. She walks beside him, rubbing her hands, noticing how he strides like a chicken, his beak-like beard going forward and coming back with each step. She tells him this.

"I am not handsome," he says, turning to her, his beard angled louringly, his nose fairly cringing.

"No," she says, always slow to flatter.

"God," he says, exploding laughter. "I don't know how a man can live with you. You have an uncanny knack for running no risk. You and your Hamlet-reheating husband."

Mooney hates a scholar.

XX. The wind will ruin the day. Andrew Devlin knows this. He brings his customary liter of *corriente* white wine, to share with the forthright, shy, noble and friendly poor, with whom he sits, halfway up in the sun. He broaches the subject of last week's *novillada*. The bulls committed suicide. He speaks of last week's hero, El Terremoto de Torremolinos. That town cannot produce a man. The bulls were fond of him but, perhaps, for an improper reason.

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All agree the wind is very bad.

One of the sharers of the wine has something in the corner of his mouth. That could be a coldsore. Could be just chapped lips. After that man drinks, Devlin tries to interest others in the bottle.

He does not require much wine. He is drunk enough. He makes light of the aliens who fill the expensive seats, of the men who chase down rows of bleachers after the straw hats of their wives. And when one large-breasted Yankee girl in slacks drawn tight as a fist appears, looking for Lou, Andrew is just as quick to stomp his feet and howl as is Sore-lip. He is clapped on the shoulder numerous times. His wine goes the rounds.

But the wind will ruin it all. When the band starts, two *pasodobles* race inside the ring; one crisp and on key, the other flat and lurching. The flags above the President's box crackle —small arms in the distance.

XXI. The first mistake: arriving on the square during the quiet, apparently preoccupied moment after an argument. One effect of this: to walk by Jen's table without stopping. One of Mooney's sons sees his father, hails him. Jen has been watching the two intently. She is seated with Mr. Ruggles, the first new American in a week.

"Fancy your not seeing us," Jen says.

Women with large mouths seldom fake a smile convincingly.

"Why didn't you say something? What is this Mrs. Miniver business?"

"I believe you've met my husband, Mr. Ruggles?"

"Yes. Two nights ago. At the Bar Crucero?"

"Antonio Three's place," Jen corrects him.

"Oh, yes. Antonio Three's."

"Mr. Ruggles," Mooney begins. "Where do you purchase trousers like that? Did you have them made up? And the shirt as well. I've never seen such fancy stuff."

Ruggles' clothing is ordinary enough. Mooney is simply after him. He's tall, he's an unshy American, and he carries a

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new Hispaño Olivetti portable down to the plaza some mornings, to do his writing in the sun.

"Mr. Ruggles," Jen says, "met Andrew last night. Andrew was quite drunk. He told Mr. Ruggles you were a fine writer, Clem." She turns to Millie. "Do you think you could tell Andrew, Millie, not to boast for Clem so? It seems a little funny to some people, I'm sure. He has such faith, you know. It just never quite occurs to him that—"

"Will you shut that great big bloody gob of yours before I ram this beer bottle down it?"

Jen and Millie laugh at Mooney's extravagance. Ruggles, who is already starting his beard, scratches at the sketchy growth and grins.

Mooney continues: "And those shoes as well. Schooners, made out of chamois. With soles of paralyzed foam off a pint of Guinnesses. What would a pair like that cost in sterling? Could you figure that out for me?"

Poor Ruggles scratches and converts. Jen tries to interest Mooney in other matters. In the sound of three hundred people walking on the square in early evening. In the scent of inexpensive perfume and smoke from a fire under a cauldron of hot oils, into which coin-shaped cuts of potato are tossed by a gypsy girl. The smoke is rosemary smoke, almost as fragrant as the perfume. Mooney interrupts her.

"They tell me you are an artist."

"I thought I'd try to do some writing while I have the time. And the money." He laughs and sucks his teeth.

It is a stupid answer. Jen shrugs and withdraws, taking up a cigarette and nudging Ruggles for a light.

"The whole bloody coast is bulging with Americans like yourself, so rich they feel they're gifted," Mooney says, beginning quietly. "Idiots. They haven't read anything but bank books. They come and they carry brand new typewriters with them, and they write every day for a week, and the rest of the time they sit about telling other Americans what a good thing they've got going for them. I've seen some of the shit they stick to paper. He fucks her on the last page. It's oriental and Buddhism and coordinated orgasms.

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They have orgasms to rival the eruptions of Vesuvius. We see them in the last sentence, floating off to paradise on scalding sperm, happy as pigs in shit. Pigs in shit, Mr. Ruggles. I hope you have something else in mind."

Mooney almost collapses onto the table when he finishes. Poor Ruggles has left off scratching. Mooney looks at him as if he has come here to see Ruggles die.

"I'll tell you how to write, Mr. Ruggles," Mooney says, slumping in his chair, white in the face and beard bent against his chest. "Kill yourself doing it."

Ruggles pays soon and leaves. He pays for everything. He leaves a tip which Mooney pockets while his wife calls him an ass in a dozen different ways.

"I suppose," he says to Millie, intentionally shutting up Jen, "I suppose you think that man is handsome? With his handmade trousers and bog-water eyes?"

"No. Of course not, I—"

Jen jumps up. "What? Do I hear correctly? Was that all a lover's quarrel? Are you jealous, Clem? Right here? Before me?" Her lips, drawn over her fine teeth, are white. She wears no lipstick. "I *must* go!"

She does go. She calls the boys, who are playing among the legs, and they walk off. From the rear, and seen moving away in the raincoat, Jen is man-sized. Her appearance, quantitatively taken, makes her less pitiable. It's a shame. The wives of poor artists often deserve pity. They cannot achieve fashion, the very thing that makes other misused wives so unpitiable. Jen is crying. She holds her head up and the tears roll out along her lashes.

XXII. The trumpet, then the bull. Andrew cannot see it come from the *toril*, which is almost beneath him, to his left. This is a good moment for Andrew, in spite of the wind and the dust. There is a good deal of unspecified lust in the young man. Sun, wine, danger (for someone else) can stir him to exhilaration. He begins to sweat profusely and one cheek twitches.

The animal is a feast for the eye. He trots out, head up,

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alert and jumpy. He goes to the center of the ring and sidesteps a complete circle, looking over the crowd.

Three peons come out into the ring and shake capes at him. He continues to look at the stands. One opens the cape and trots out nearer the bull. He lowers his head; the man drops one side of the cape and walks away from the bull, dragging the cloth. The bull lifts his head. Not going anywhere. Andrew's questions here are always the same: Is he a coward or wise? Does one quality imply the other?

Antonio Medina comes from behind the barrier, his serious long face going one way and his serious long hat going the other. He has his cape folded before him; when he straightens it out, he takes the top of it between his teeth. It opens like a sail. He approaches the animal.

Nothing.

He tries several times striking a toe into the dust, grunting. Then tries to lead the bull to another spot. Then tries a new angle; this seems to be the answer. The bull starts. But in mid-charge he veers off and gallops around the outside edge of the ring, looking up into the stands.

Medina seems to know where the bull will stop. He goes there; it is almost as far from Andrew as he can go and remain in the ring. He sets himself and the bull comes for him; he makes the one good pass of the afternoon.

Sore-lip slaps Andrew on the back and pulls the bottle out of his hands. "That Medina, a good man, eh?"

Andrew cannot tell if that spot is open or just discolored. In size, color, and texture it suggests a raisin. Another Gregor Samsa. Perhaps Sore-lip was at one time an insect? And his humanity just a rotten trick someone had played?

Andrew expands on this, juggling ideas a bit, so that Horatio and Hamlet are included, while the horses enter the ring.

XXIII. "Mad bastard! You have no right to be jealous! And you are an idiot, talking like that before your wife."

"You'll have to take care of me tonight. Feed me. She'll lock me out."

"I'm serious. You've ruined everything."

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"I'm serious. I have been all along. I've ruined nothing. Yet."

"But you just said she would—"

"—Lock me out for an hour, or five hours, or a night. A single night at best. She depends on me, you know. I am her provider and protector." He speaks without humor. "She, in turn, is the mother of my sons. Our union has purpose."

"If that's the case, why—"

"—Why do I try to lure the likes of you into the cane fields? Surely all of Andrew's talk about plague and hubris and absurdity has convinced you that man is imperfect?" No irony there; he would guard against it.

She will not tolerate unkind comments about her husband most of the time. She is beginning to admire Mooney as a domestic acrobat. What risks he runs, she thinks. For me, she thinks.

XXIV. The third bull of the afternoon gets a horn in-between the legs of Earthquake from Torremolinos and lifts him high over his back, a garish horizontal figure in green and gold—and hat—above the bull's broad back suspended, wriggling. Andrew Devlin feels that blow to the groin. He gasps and his knees fly apart. Then the bull lowers Earthquake to his feet and extracts the horn from a two-ended tear in his trousers. The young man is, however, not unscathed. Blood trickles out; a patch of blood widens and lengthens on the satin; in a while it will tint the hose. But a little wound is not enough.

The wind blows off all chance for glory. Nothing can be glorious in the old sense. Define the word anew. He is disposed to wring from this moment new ideas for his volume, but he is troubled by the drunkard's quick-fill bladder. So he misses the new glory of a too-early, too-eager kill and passes down between the row of troubled knees to the aisle. Downstairs, in the bowels of the arena, he finds a public room—fetor, muddy floors, savage flatulence.

This should be on stage as well, he thinks. Should be up there, on display, wounding the senses, this rankling common-

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place. For is it all not, even on the sunniest of days, a shit heap getting higher for the good weather?

Light—splinters of it, coming from cracks in the seats—and the mumble of voices, like the groan of happy, harvesting bugs gloating over a clover field or a cadaver. And off a bit, a horse's weak whinny, cock-crow of this underworld. Andrew, returning, is almost merry.

XXV. It is arranged, then, in the oddest fashion. She has no money; he never has money. She must go home because she has been too long at this bar and she wants a shower. He will leave with her but he will have no place to return to, since he has chased his wife off, and the other foreigners do not, as a general rule, like him. What will we do with him then?

Mind if I just sort of you know tag along kind of thing? Heh. Heh.

"There's some beer at my house," she volunteers. Not just consent, mind you, but a show of undisguised zeal.

They cross the square, right through the *paseo*, her head high, on a level with any inquisitive head turned toward her, providing the backdrop, as he said, for their dawdling, as he said.

He carries her basket.

Passing Antonio Cerezo's bar they see Mrs. Mooney and her two boys. She is seated at a table; the boys are beneath the table, sipping orange Fanta. And Mr. Ruggles, fingers combing the whiskers, is entertaining.

"He must be the host. Jen would never buy them Fanta."

Millie sees them, says outright: "What if she takes a liking to Mr. Ruggles? What if they became lovers?"

"I would be surprised."

"But..."

"I couldn't stop her. And I would not hate her for it."

Yes, Millie thinks. "Andrew," she says, "feels differently."

"Andrew does not enjoy himself at anything. Candy exists to rot teeth. Books exist to reveal heresy. Wives to ruin husbands. And on. And on."

They turn into Calle Franco. It is dusk and the slot of the

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street runs shadow and human forms. Without the street-lights it is very dark, a flooded river bearing away a populace. But the tops of the buildings on the righthand side still hold some sign of day to them. There is a remnant of light along the fringe of tiles that overlaps the walls. And the faces of the gargoyle rainpipes—serpent and beaked-bird—angle their rusty menace out over the dark movement below.

Mr. Mooney takes the keys, opens the door.

XXVI. Andrew begins to drink beer. He buys beer for his friends, the cohorts of Sore-lip, who could not afford a chancre, and they continue to slap him on the back and consult him about the matters of the *corrida*. Their slurred speech and his stumbled hearing produce intimacy.

The last bull of the afternoon is Earthquake's. For almost every person present it has been a dismal day; yet, because Earthquake was last Sunday's hero, there is some hope left. Fewer people are leaving than one might expect. Still, enough go to indicate a bad day; and enough of these are Spaniards to certify the failure.

Earthquake sends everyone out of the ring and then is chased out himself by the bull. He goes head-first over the barrier. But no one finds this funny. There is a reason: the bull shows courage. None of the capework is of exceptional quality but there is just the faintest suggestion that the failure is now due to the whims of nature (the wind). The wind has been diminishing steadily for some time. But it is still there. There is some anger when the change is ordered by the President.

XXVII. It is not quite a kiss. When is a kiss not a kiss?

He takes her in his arms but he bites her. Bites the lower lip, and hard enough to set her hopping in pain.

She *loves* it. Brute. *Brute*. *An*imal!

"Just a minute," she says. And she rushes upstairs to her bedroom for her contraceptive equipment. (The pill makes her ill.) In a minute she returns prepared.

Descending the stairs she notices how, in an odd way, that pain in her lip has become something less than pain. It is a

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tingle, very slight. But when he kisses her again she knows the truth: that lip is swelling. Still she is far too aroused to let a little swelling stifle a pure passion.

They "sink to the floor" after bumping around in the dark, knocking against the table. (It is a shame, in a way, that Andrew's broken glasses did not fall off that table, break completely, for the symmetry.) She is bitten a few times; earlobes and lower neck, shoulder, lip again. The biting is a bit extreme, she feels, as it goes on. She worries about marking. A swollen lip is one thing; appearing nibbled up quite another. This worry, and it really reaches its peak after coitus, probably is the single unpleasant aspect of their intercourse, but it deprives her of orgasm. Mooney, however, finds nothing in his way.

XXVIII. With the small cape Earthquake might have saved the day. But the *pics* have ended the fight for him, as they often do when young bulls show courage going after the horse. The wind cannot blow away the horse, as you might suspect, and if the bull looked indecisive or handicapped in the phase previous, he is now able to display his power and determination against insane odds.

So the crowd cheers the bold animal as it impales itself, and the President is reluctant to send the horses out, and it goes on a little—perhaps only one gouge—too long.

Earthquake is furious and shows it. When it is time to kill he does not dedicate the bull. He walks from behind the barrier dragging the *muleta* and approaches the animal with his hands at his side. But he gets close. And in his stride is a bit of a swagger. And when he flashes the cape and the bull's head lifts quickly, following the cloth, the young man sees that the vision is impaired not at all. No, what has ruined this bull is the blood lust of the audience. Earthquake manages to communicate this with a contemptuous shrug.

He lifts the cape then. And the bull lurches forward and knocks the young man down. It is more on the order of an enforced nudge. Earthquake plays dead. The bull doesn't give him a thought. The crowd enjoys this.

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He is bowled over three times. The beast seems not at all concerned with hurting him. Disgrace him, yes; but wound him, never.

Andrew grasps that. Others—howling now—do not. Andrew wants to see it. It helps him, gives him strength, affirms.

XXIX. She takes a shower and does one or two other little things to her person. Mr. Mooney waits for her, first in the kitchen and then in Andrew's study, where he is not permitted. He is drinking a beer and looking over Andrew's papers when Millie comes in. She is barefoot, wears white slacks and a shirt with the tail out. Her lip is swollen and there is a strange mark on her neck, just below her left ear.

"What are you doing in here?"

"Drinking my beer, looking for a match, and sneaking glimpses of your husband's notes. It is a very dreary room. No one could find a place to put an idea in all this."

He indicates the desk.

"From the looks of the dust I don't think he does much anyway," Millie says. A momentary regret, a small extravagance.

"You don't know?"

"No. He has quit typing. He thinks at one speed, types at another. So he says."

"The miserable bastard."

"It's a strange time to feel sorry for him."

"I don't care about him. I'm thinking of you." He looks at her. "That lip. He'll see that, you know. And the other thing."

She takes that lip in her fingers, tenderly. "The 'irst ti' I 'een 'itten."

Mooney's nose quivers; his spastic nostrils pale. He turns his head. "It's all damned cruel. We should all squeal like cats when we're at it. Just like a lot of cats."

XXX. He leaves when the bull is dying and Earthquake, dust-covered and muddy in places with sweat, is standing before the crowd, his hands before him, supplicating. He

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wants permission to circle the ring after the animal is dead. The people are jeering, whistling. Sore-lip calls him shameless. A man rushes out, digs a dagger into the bull's neck, and the great hulk convulses, the eyes roll, the tongue emerges, blue-black with death.

Devlin leaves.

He has a little trouble keeping the scooter upright and under him while starting it. And the dark glasses bother him more than they should.

—Li'l coffee. Somethin' to eat.

Unfortunately, where he stops there is nothing to eat but half a dozen *churros* that have spent the afternoon blotting up oil from other *churros* that have been sold. Soggy rolled dough fried in fat and chill now, just a trifle rancid. There is one cause for his eating what little he eats. The woman who sells him the coffee has three fingers missing from one hand, is ugly, and runs a very dirty little coffee bar. She is quite apologetic when he asks for something to eat. All she can offer him is this handful of *churros*. But she will *give* these to him. *Por nada*. But, but. No, señor.

Gracias.

XXXI. Ruggles and Jen and the children, all clamoring at the door. And Mooney lets them in. The idiot. Millie retreats to the kitchen, where she begins slicing fresh tomatoes for Andrew's salad.

Jen and Ruggles are a bit tight. The children come in and stand against the wall. They are tired. Millie would like to offer the children some milk but she cannot turn to them because her swollen lip would be exposed.

"Clem, I want you to apologize to Mr. Ruggles here. He is a very fine young man who has done his level best to keep down venereal disease."

"I'm very sorry. And thank you," Mooney says.

"Did you *hear* that Millie? He fights venereal disease. He is a civil servant and he goes about Los Angeles tracking down syphilis. He is hell on the homosexual; dreadful carriers, that lot. Promiscuous."

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"I'm the curse of the spirochete," Ruggles puts in.

"He calls himself the syph-hound. Millie? The syph-hound?" Jen stops talking for a second. Millie, who isn't looking at her, cannot look at her, senses the trouble.

"Syph-hound," she says, but too late.

Jen is upon her in an instant. "Turn around." She shakes her head. "Oh, God, it's done is it? You poor thing; he's chewed you all up."

She goes away. She gets her children and Mr. Ruggles and starts out the door. Then she stops and leaves the children with their father. And she and Mr. Ruggles go out the door. And the boys look at Mooney and Millie.

"Hungry, Da," says one.

"Yiss," says the other.

XXXII. The dangers are not the roads themselves, which he knows well enough, but the towns where there are no plazas. Here the couples walk the highway, and try to get out into the darker places, near the fields. And the young men enjoy walking far out into the lane, so that cars have to swerve to miss them, for it is no small thing, moving a car out of its path with your mettle. No woman will deny that.

So he goes along successfully enough for a while. He gets sick once and has to stop and throw up. But that is not so bad. And when the headlights of a passing car illuminate a band of saliva that connects him with his vomit, he is not even ashamed. He knows the limits of man. They are writ broad upon the earth. He has spent the day studying them.

He decides he cannot stop for coffee again; in spite of the unpleasant prospects home affords him—Hamlet is dead; the palace is torn down; and Hamlet didn't work out well there anyhow—he must return to his house, his food, his bed. Tomorrow? Read Camus. Live for the moment.

Beyond Torre del Mar then, cruising through cane fields, killing bugs and tasting bitter, he is not an unhappy man. The chorus of dark and the stars; the wind blowing past his ears; the scooter's little drumming; the sickness abated: all conjoin to lift him above ordinary or embarrassing circumstance.

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He goes over a bridge and makes a slow curve through the dark so that, emerging from the shadow, lights of a roadside settlement appear. He cuts his speed automatically; and the generator puts out less power; and the cone of the headlight's beam is shortened.

Happens every day.

XXXIII. I am not going to be depressed, Millie thinks.

"Let's all eat together," she says. "Andrew will be here soon. I'll cook for all of us."

"What about your wound?"

"He won't think anything of it. I'll say I fell. Or a *calabaza* dropped down and hit me. The *calabazas* fall all the time out in the patio."

"I wouldn't believe that."

"What do you suggest?"

"That you tell him what happened."

"Why?"

"To see what he does."

She gives the boys slices of tomato. She is considering Mooney's statement. His proposal. Why this?

"Why?"

"Because he won't do anything."

"So?" She responds thus because she suspects that he is correct. She is a little shy confronting that suspicion. After all, she is married to the man.

XXXIV. First it is a dark shirt, white teeth, and a shoe getting into his beam. He merely turns and avoids the couple —the young woman's shriek is a beacon. In a hundred yards or so, he will be in the light of the village; he would not have had this difficulty, which was hardly a difficulty at this moment, had he been a hundred yards further down the *carretera.* These are, however, his last one hundred yards.

In compensating for the abrupt turn Andrew Devlin unwittingly alters the current of air that plays up over the front of the scooter. A bug, drawn to the diminished beam of his headlight, blows in, under the frames of his dark glasses.

One could call it the intervention of fate.

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With one eye blind and the other burning, his first reaction is to release the clutch hand and rub the pain. He does this —idiot!—and the scooter swerves again. The second couple scream; he twists the wheel, this time in trouble, knowing it, and calm enough. He is slowing down. Tears are the hindrance; the lights come forward as through slime. Yet there remains to him a chance, but a very slight one, as all must see.

A dog, a fat waddling long-dugged mongrel bitch, who feeds her litter from what refuse finds its way into the drainage trenches that border the road, misjudges the sound of his approaching scooter, the unsteady beam of his headlamp. She undertakes to explore the other side, for the odd morsel, and trots across. She makes it, but the uproar that seems to descend upon her sends her rolling down into the ditch. She crawls up to the edge, she lays her nose on the cool gravel of the shoulder; she eyes the confusion she, in part, has caused.

For Andrew Devlin will harm neither the discreet lovers nor the chubby little mother. When the dog's crusty nose enters the cone of his light, he jerks the wheel again, double braking an instant later, and squeezing the handbrake before he hits the pedal. The front wheel locks at an angle. The rest of the scooter rams up against the gooseneck, and the rear-end lifts, throwing Andrew upward.

Here, for an instant, with a boost from the machine itself, he achieves a handstand. His hat and glasses are in place; his new boots rise, heels together, neatly. Right up, continuing after the rear tire drops, and just as he enters the glare of the town's first streetlight, he is complete. Doomed, absurd, comic, misunderstood, he is sailing down a Spanish road at some thirty miles per hour, upside down, as if the greatest trick Lambretta rider of all time had arrived unexpectedly, and now the sleepy little *pueblo* of M... were in for some *real* thrills.

But Andrew leaves the support of the handlebars, moves onward, pulled downward, arms dangling, hands spread. The illusion ends. He hits but is too slow in tumbling. The hat is scraped away, and it is not empty, and what it contains is not peanuts. His body settles slowly. Brows, bones, blood, tweed,

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buttons grind from the slow sprawl. The scooter, wide open, spins in a circle, its light probing the sky.

Spaniards keep the dogs off for a time. Then two members of the Guardia Civil arrive and order the men to keep the dogs off.

They cover Andrew Devlin with a tarp.

XXXV. The boys eat sliced tomato, sucking juice from their fingers. They are seated in the hall on the floor, will not sit at the table. Millie, using the ribbed skillet, will be serving them fresh sardines *a la plancha* soon. Mooney will do his best to remove the bones.

Millie is silent and Mooney, always thinking for others, thinks he knows what she is thinking.

"If you put a little ice on the wound, the swelling will go down."

"Ice," Millie repeats, and leaves the stove for the icebox.

"Unless you've decided to tell him."

"I can't see why I should. If he won't do anything."

"Most likely Jen will tell him."

"He won't believe her."

"It would be better if he did. It would be more interesting. It would give him something to think about, something quite real." He walks to the stove, takes up the spatula, flips over a fish. "Hamlet, you know, was a fictional character." He smiles. "Wasn't he, boys?"

"Yisss."

And they are right, all of them, about everything.

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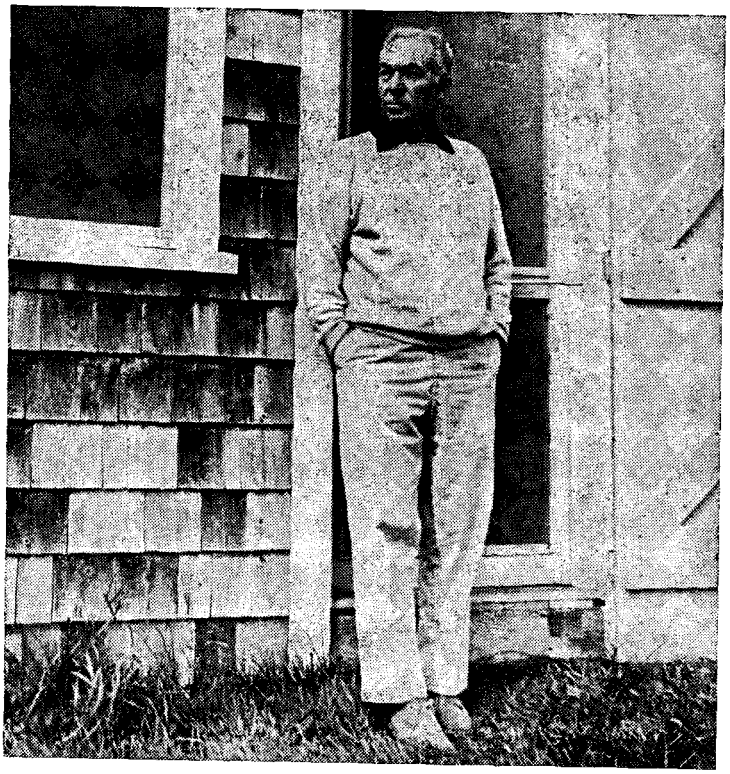
The Art of the Essay I

E. B. White



If it happens that your parents concern themselves so little with the workings of boys' minds as to christen you Elwyn Brooks White, no doubt you decide as early as possible to identify yourself as E. B. White. If it also happens that you attend Cornell, whose first president was Andrew D. White, then, following a variant of the principle that everybody named Rhodes winds up being nicknamed "Dusty," you wind up being nicknamed "Andy." And so

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it has come about that for fifty of his seventy years Elwyn Brooks White has been known to his readers as E. B. White and to his friends as Andy. Andy White. Andy and Katharine White. The Whites. Andy and Katharine have been married for forty years, and in that time they have been separated so rarely that I find it impossible to think of one without the other. On the occasions when they have been obliged to be apart, Andy's conversation is so likely to center on Katharine that she becomes all the more present for being absent.

The Whites have shared everything, from professional association on the same magazine to preoccupation with a joint ill health that many of their friends have been inclined to regard as imaginary. Years ago, in a Christmas doggerel, Edmund Wilson saluted them for possessing "mens sana in corpore insano," *and it was always wonderful to behold the intuitive seesaw adjustments by which one of them got well in time for the other to get sick. What a mountain of good work they have accumulated in that fashion! Certainly they have been the strongest and most productive unhealthy couple that I have ever encountered, but I no longer dare to make fun of their ailments. Now that age is bestowing on them a natural infirmity, they must be sorely tempted to say to the rest of us, "You see? What did we tell you?" ("Sorely," by the way, has been a favorite adverb of Andy's—a word that brims with bodily woe and that yet hints at the heroic: back of Andy, some dying knight out of Malory lifts his gleaming sword against the dusk.)*

Andy White is small and wiry, with an unexpectedly large nose, speckled eyes, and an air of being just about to turn away, not on an errand of any importance but as a means of remaining free to cut and run without the nuisance of prolonged good-byes. Crossing the threshold of his eighth decade, his person is uncannily boyish-seeming. Though his hair is grey, I learn at this moment that I do not consent to the fact: away from him, I remember it as brown, therefore it is brown to me. Andy can no more lose his youthfulness by the tiresome necessary accident of growing old than he could ever have been Elwyn by the tiresome un-necessary accident of baptism; his youth and his "Andy"-ness are intrinsic and inexpungeable. Katharine White is a woman so good-looking that nobody has taken it amiss when her husband has described her in

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print as beautiful, but her beauty has a touch of blue-eyed augustness in it, and her manner is formal. It would never occur to me to go beyond calling her Katharine, and I have not found it surprising when her son, Roger Angell, an editor of The New Yorker, *refers to her within the office precincts as "Mrs. White." (Roger Angell is the son of her marriage to a distinguished New York attorney, Ernest Angell; she and Andy have a son, Joe, who is a naval architect and whose boatyard is a thriving enterprise in the Whites' hometown of Brooklin, Maine.)*

At the risk of reducing a man's life to a sort of Merck's Manual, I may mention that Andy White's personal physician, Dana Atchley—giving characteristically short shrift to a psychosomatic view of his old friend—has described him as having a Rolls Royce mind in a Model T body. With Andy, this would pass for a compliment, because in the tyranny of his modesty he would always choose to be a Ford instead of a Rolls, but it would be closer to the truth to describe him as a Rolls Royce mind in a Rolls Royce body that unaccountably keeps bumping to a stop and humming to itself, not without infinite pleasure to others along the way. What he achieves must cost him a considerable effort and appears to cost him very little. His speaking voice, like his writing voice, is clear, resonant, and invincibly debonair. He wanders over the pastures of his Maine farm or, for that matter, along the labyrinthine corridors of The New Yorker *offices on West Forty-Third Street with the offhand grace of a dancer making up a sequence of steps that the eye follows with delight and that defies any but his own notation. Clues to the bold and delicate nature of those steps are to be discovered in every line he writes, but the man and his work are so nearly one that, try as we will, we cannot tell the dancer from the dance.*

—BRENDAN GILL

INTERVIEWER

So many critics equate the success of a writer with an unhappy childhood. Can you say something of your own childhood in Mt. Vernon.

WHITE

As a child, I was frightened but not unhappy. My parents

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were loving and kind. We were a large family (six children) and were a small kingdom unto ourselves. Nobody ever came to dinner. My father was formal, conservative, successful, hard-working, and worried. My mother was loving, hard-working, and retiring. We lived in a large house in a leafy suburb, where there were backyards and stables and grape arbors. I lacked for nothing except confidence. I suffered nothing except the routine terrors of childhood: fear of the dark, fear of the future, fear of the return to school after a summer on a lake in Maine, fear of making an appearance on a platform, fear of the lavatory in the school basement where the slate urinals cascaded, fear that I was unknowing about things I should know about. I was, as a child, allergic to pollens and dusts, and still am. I was allergic to platforms, and still am. It may be, as some critics suggest, that it helps to have an unhappy childhood. If so, I have no knowledge of it. Perhaps it helps to have been scared or allergic to pollens—I don't know.

INTERVIEWER

At what age did you know you were going to follow a literary profession? Was there a particular incident, or moment?

WHITE

I never knew for sure that I would follow a literary profession. I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight before anything happened that gave me any assurance that I could make a go of writing. I had *done* a great deal of writing, but I lacked confidence in my ability to put it to good use. I went abroad one summer and on my return to New York found an accumulation of mail at my apartment. I took the letters, unopened, and went to a Child's restaurant on 14th Street, where I ordered dinner and began opening my mail. From one envelope, two or three checks dropped out, from *The New Yorker*. I suppose they totaled a little under a hundred dollars, but it looked like a fortune to me. I can still remember the feeling that "this was it"—I was a pro at last. It was a good feeling and I enjoyed the meal.

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INTERVIEWER

What were those first pieces accepted by *The New Yorker*? Did you send them in with a covering letter, or through an agent?

WHITE

They were short sketches—what Ross called "casuals." One, I think, was a piece called "Swell Steerage," about the then new college cabin class on transatlantic ships. I never submitted a manuscript with a covering letter or through an agent. I used to put my manuscript in the mail, along with a stamped envelope for the rejection. This was a matter of high principle with me: I believed in the doctrine of immaculate rejection. I never used an agent and did not like the looks of a manuscript after an agent got through prettying it up and putting it between covers with brass clips. (I now have an agent for such mysteries as movie rights and foreign translations.)

A large part of all early contributions to *The New Yorker* arrived uninvited and unexpected. They arrived in the mail or under the arm of people who walked in with them. O'Hara's "Afternoon Delphians" is one example out of hundreds. For a number of years, *The New Yorker* published an average of fifty new writers a year. Magazines that refuse unsolicited manuscripts strike me as lazy, incurious, self-assured, and self-important. I'm speaking of magazines of general circulation. There may be some justification for a technical journal to limit its list of contributors to persons who are known to be qualified. But if I were a publisher, I wouldn't want to put out a magazine that failed to examine everything that turned up.

INTERVIEWER

But did *The New Yorker* ever try to publish the emerging writers of the time: Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos, Fitzgerald, Miller, Lawrence, Joyce, Wolfe, *et al*?

WHITE

The New Yorker had an interest in publishing any writer

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that could turn in a good piece. It read everything submitted. Hemingway, Faulkner, and the others were well-established and well-paid when *The New Yorker* came on the scene. The magazine would have been glad to publish them, but it didn't have the money to pay them off, and for the most part they didn't submit. They were selling to the *Saturday Evening Post* and other well-heeled publications, and in general were not inclined to contribute to the small, new, impecunious weekly. Also, some of them, I would guess, did not feel sympathetic to *The New Yorker's* frivolity. Ross had no great urge to publish the big names; he was far more interested in turning up new and yet undiscovered talent, the Helen Hokinsons and the James Thurbers. We did publish some things by Wolfe—"Only the Dead Know Brooklyn" was one. I believe we published something by Fitzgerald. But Ross didn't waste much time trying to corral "emerged" writers. He was looking for the ones that were found by turning over a stone.

INTERVIEWER

What were the procedures in turning down a manuscript by a *New Yorker* regular? Was this done by Ross?

WHITE

The manuscript of a *New Yorker* regular was turned down in the same manner as was the manuscript of a *New Yorker* irregular. It was simply rejected, usually by the sub-editor who was handling the author in question. Ross did not deal directly with writers and artists, except in the case of a few old friends from an earlier day. He wouldn't even take on Woollcott—regarded him as too difficult and fussy. Ross disliked rejecting pieces, and he disliked firing people—he ducked both tasks whenever he could.

INTERVIEWER

Did feuds threaten the magazine?

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WHITE

Feuds did not threaten *The New Yorker*. The only feud I recall was the running battle between the editorial department and the advertising department. This was largely a one-sided affair, with the editorial department lobbing an occasional grenade into the enemy's lines just on general principles, to help them remember to stay out of sight. Ross was determined not to allow his magazine to be swayed, in the slightest degree, by the boys in advertising. As far as I know, he succeeded.

INTERVIEWER

When did you first move to New York, and what were some of the things you did before joining *The New Yorker?* Were you ever a part of the Algonquin group?

WHITE

After I got out of college, in 1921, I went to work in New York but did not live in New York. I lived at home, with my father and mother in Mount Vernon, and commuted to work. I held three jobs in about seven months—first with the United Press, then with a public relations man named Wheat, then with the American Legion News Service. I disliked them all, and in the spring of 1922 I headed west in a Model T Ford with a college mate, Howard Cushman, to seek my fortune and as a way of getting away from what I disliked. I landed in Seattle six months later, worked there as a reporter on the *Times* for a year, was fired, shipped to Alaska aboard a freighter, and then returned to New York. It was on my return that I became an advertising man—Frank Seaman & Co, J. H. Newmark. In the mid-Twenties, I moved into a two-room apartment at 112 West 13th Street with three other fellows, college mates of mine at Cornell: Burke Dowling Adams, Gustave Stubbs Lobrano, and Mitchell T. Galbreath. The rent was $110 a month. Split four ways it came to $27.50, which I could afford.

My friends in those days were the fellows already mentioned. Also, Peter Vischer, Russell Lord, Joel Sayre, Frank

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Sullivan (he was older and more advanced but I met him and liked him), James Thurber, and others. I was never a part of the Algonquin group. After becoming connected with *The New Yorker*, I lunched once at the Round Table but didn't care for it and was embarrassed in the presence of the great. I never was well acquainted with Benchley or Broun or Dorothy Parker or Woollcott. I did not know Don Marquis or Ring Lardner, both of whom I greatly admired. I was a younger man.

INTERVIEWER

Were you a voracious reader during your youth?

WHITE

I was never a voracious reader and, in fact, have done little reading in my life. There are too many other things I would rather do than read. In my youth I read animal stories—William J. Long and Ernest Seton Thompson. I have read a great many books about small boat voyages—they fascinate me even though they usually have no merit. In the Twenties, I read the newspaper columns: F.P.A., Christopher Morley, Don Marquis. I tried contributing and had a few things published. (As a child, I was a member of the St. Nicholas League and from that eminence was hurled into the literary life, wearing my silver badge and my gold badge.) My reading habits have not changed over the years, only my eyesight has changed. I don't like being indoors and get out every chance I get. In order to read, one must sit down, usually indoors. I am restless and would rather sail a boat than crack a book. I've never had a very lively literary curiosity, and it has sometimes seemed to me that I am not really a literary fellow at all. Except that I write for a living.

INTERVIEWER

The affinity with nature has been very important to you. This seems a contradiction considering the urbanity of *The New Yorker* and its early contributions.

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WHITE

There is no contradiction. New York is part of the natural world. I love the city, I love the country, and for the same reasons. The city is part of the country. When I had an apartment in East 48th Street, my backyard during the migratory season yielded more birds than I ever saw in Maine. I could step out on my porch, spring or fall, and there was the hermit thrush, picking around in McEvoy's yard. Or the white-throated sparrow, the brown thrasher, the jay, the kinglet. John Kieran has recorded the immense variety of flora and fauna within the limits of Greater New York.

But it is not just a question of birds and animals. The urban scene is a spectacle that fascinates me. People are animals, and the city is full of people in strange plumage, defending their territorial rights, digging for their supper.

INTERVIEWER

Although you say you are "not really a literary fellow at all," have you read any books, say in the past ten years, that deeply impressed you?

WHITE

I admire anybody who has the guts to write anything at all. As for what comes out on paper, I'm not well equipped to speak about it. When I should be reading, I am almost always doing something else. It is a matter of some embarrassment to me that I have never read Joyce and a dozen other writers who have changed the face of literature. But there you are. I picked up *Ulysses* the other evening, when my eye lit on it, and gave it a go. I stayed with it only for about twenty minutes, then was off and away. It takes more than a genius to keep me reading a book. But when I latch onto a book like *They Live by the Wind*, by Wendell P. Bradley, I am glued tight to the chair. It is because Bradley wrote about something that has always fascinated (and uplifted) me—sailing. He wrote about it very well, too.

I was deeply impressed by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. It may well be the book by which the human race will stand

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or fall. I enjoyed *Speak, Memory* by Nabokov when I read it—a fine example of remembering.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have a special interest in the other arts?

WHITE

I have no special interest in any of the other arts. I know nothing of music or of painting or of sculpture or of the dance. I would rather watch the circus or a ball game than ballet.

INTERVIEWER

Can you listen to music, or be otherwise half-distracted when you're working on something?

WHITE

I never listen to music when I'm working. I haven't that kind of attentiveness, and I wouldn't like it at all. On the other hand, I'm able to work fairly well among ordinary distractions. My house has a living room that is at the core of everything that goes on: it is a passageway to the cellar, to the kitchen, to the closet where the phone lives. There's a lot of traffic. But it's a bright, cheerful room, and I often use it as a room to write in, despite the carnival that is going on all around me. A girl pushing a carpet sweeper under my typewriter table has never annoyed me particularly, nor has it taken my mind off my work, unless the girl was unusually pretty or unusually clumsy. My wife, thank God, has never been protective of me, as, I am told, the wives of some writers are. In consequence, the members of my household never pay the slightest attention to my being a writing man—they make all the noise and fuss they want to. If I get sick of it, I have places I can go. A writer who waits for ideal conditions under which to work will die without putting a word on paper.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any warm-up exercises to get going?

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WHITE

Delay is natural to a writer. He is like a surfer—he bides his time, waits for the perfect wave on which to ride in. Delay is instinctive with him. He waits for the surge (of emotion? of strength? of courage?) that will carry him along. I have no warm-up exercises, other than to take an occasional drink. I am apt to let something simmer for a while in my mind before trying to put it into words. I walk around, straightening pictures on the wall, rugs on the floor—as though not until everything in the world was lined up and perfectly true could anybody reasonably expect me to set a word down on paper.

INTERVIEWER

You have wondered at Kenneth Roberts' working methods—his stamina and discipline. You said you often went to zoos rather than write. Can you say something of discipline and the writer?

WHITE

Kenneth Roberts wrote historical novels. He knew just what he wanted to do and where he was going. He rose in the morning and went to work, methodically and industriously. This has not been true of me. The things I have managed to write have been varied and spotty—a mishmash. Except for certain routine chores, I never knew in the morning how the day was going to develop. I was like a hunter, hoping to catch sight of a rabbit.

There are two faces to discipline. If a man (who writes) feels like going to a zoo, he should by all means go to a zoo. He might even be lucky, as I once was when I paid a call at the Bronx Zoo and found myself attending the birth of twin fawns. It was a fine sight, and I lost no time writing a piece about it. The other face of discipline is that, zoo or no zoo, diversion or no diversion, in the end a man must sit down and get the words on paper, and against great odds. This takes stamina and resolution. Having got them on paper, he must still have the discipline to discard them if they fail to measure

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up; he must view them with a jaundiced eye and do the whole thing over as many times as is necessary to achieve excellence, or as close to excellence as he can get. This varies from one time to maybe twenty.

INTERVIEWER

Does the finished product need a gestation period—that is, do you put a finished work away and look at it a month hence?

WHITE

It depends on what kind of product it is. Many a poem could well use more than nine months. On the other hand, a newspaper report of a fire in a warehouse can't be expected to enjoy a gestation period. When I finished *Charlotte's Web*, I put it away, feeling that something was wrong. The story had taken me two years to write, working on and off, but I was in no particular hurry. I took another year to rewrite it, and it was a year well spent. If I write something and feel doubtful about it, I soak it away. The passage of time can be a help in evaluating it. But in general, I tend to rush into print, riding a wave of emotion.

INTERVIEWER

Do you revise endlessly? How do you know when something is right? Is perhaps this critical ability the necessary equipment for the writer?

WHITE

I revise a great deal. I know when something is right because bells begin ringing and lights flash. I'm not at all sure what the "necessary equipment" is for a writer—it seems to vary greatly with the individual. Some writers are equipped with extra-sensory perception. Some have a good ear, like O'Hara. Some are equipped with humor—although not nearly as many as think they are. Some are equipped with a massive intellect, like Wilson. Some are prodigious. I do think the ability to evaluate one's own stuff with reasonable

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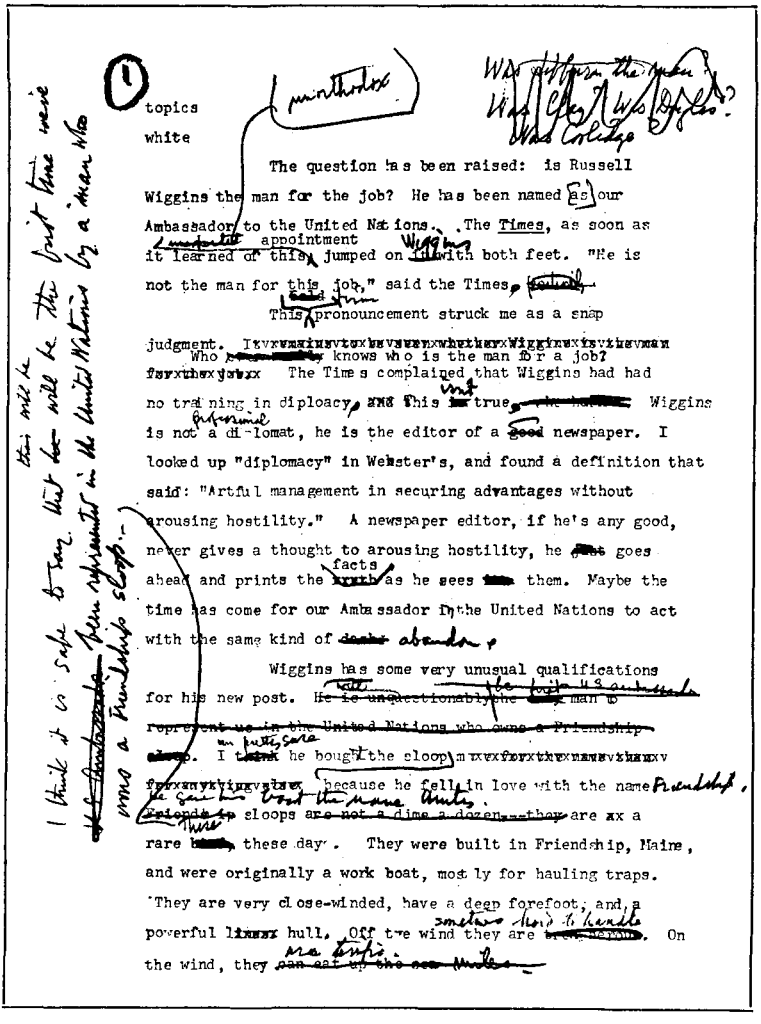

topics
white

The question has been raised: is Russell Wiggins the man for the job? He has been named as our Ambassador to the United Nations. The Times, as soon as it learned of this appointment, jumped on him with both feet. "He is not the man for this job," said the Times, editorially.

This pronouncement struck me as a snap judgment. Who knows who is the man for a job? The Times complained that Wiggins had had no training in diplomacy, and this is true. Wiggins is not a diplomat, he is the editor of a good newspaper. I looked up "diplomacy" in Webster's, and found a definition that said: "Artful management in securing advantages without arousing hostility." A newspaper editor, if he's any good, never gives a thought to arousing hostility, he goes ahead and prints the facts as he sees them. Maybe the time has come for our Ambassador to the United Nations to act with the same kind of candor.

Wiggins has some very unusual qualifications for his new post. I think he bought the sloop because he fell in love with the name Friendship. Sloops are not a dime a dozen--they are a rare bird these days. They were built in Friendship, Maine, and were originally a work boat, mostly for hauling traps. They are very close-winded, have a deep forefoot, and a powerful hull. Off the wind they are sometimes hard to handle. On the wind, they

E. B. White manuscript page: *New York Times* article

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accuracy is a helpful piece of equipment. I've known good writers who've had it, and I've known good writers who've not. I've known writers who were utterly convinced that anything at all, if it came from their pen, was the work of genius and as close to being right as anything can be.

INTERVIEWER

In your essay, *An Approach to Style*, your first rule for the writer is to place himself in the background. But recently you are quoted as saying: "I am an egoist, inclined to inject myself into almost everything I write." Is this not contradictory?

WHITE

There is no contradiction. The precept "place yourself in the background" is a useful one. It's true that I paid little attention to it. Neither have a lot of other writers. It all depends on what's going on, and it depends on the nature of the beast. An accomplished reporter usually places himself in the background. An experienced novelist usually does. But certainly nobody would want Kilvert to place himself in the background—there would be nothing left. As for me, I'm no Kilvert, neither am I a reporter or a novelist. I live by my wits and started at an early age to inject myself into the act, as a clown does in the ring. This is all very well if you can get away with it, but a young writer will find that it is better discipline to stay in the background than to lunge forward on the assumption that his presence is necessary for the success of the occasion.

INTERVIEWER

Since your interest with Strunk on style, have there been any other such books you would recommend?

WHITE

I'm not familiar with books on style. My role in the revival of Strunk's book was a fluke—just something I took on because I was not doing anything else at the time. It cost me a year out of my life, so little did I know about grammar.

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INTERVIEWER

Is style something that can be taught?

WHITE

I don't think it can be taught. Style results more from what a person is than from what he knows. But there are a few hints that can be thrown out to advantage.

INTERVIEWER

What would these few hints be?

WHITE

They would be the twenty-one hints I threw out in Chapter V of *The Elements of Style*. There was nothing new or original about them, but there they are, for all to read.

INTERVIEWER

Thurber said that if there was such a thing as a *New Yorker* style, possibly it was "playing it down." Would you agree?

WHITE

I don't agree that there is such a thing as *New Yorker* style. The magazine has published an enormous volume of stuff, written by a very long and varied roster of contributors. I see not the slightest resemblance between, say, Cheever's style and the style of the late Alva Johnston. I see no resemblance between, say, Thurber's style and the style of Muriel Spark. If sometimes there seems to be a sort of sameness of sound in *The New Yorker*, it probably can be traced to the magazine's copy desk, which is a marvelous fortress of grammatical exactitude and stylish convention. Commas in *The New Yorker* fall with the precision of knives in a circus act, outlining the victim. This may sometimes have a slight tendency to make one writer sound a bit like another. But on the whole, *New Yorker* writers are jealous of their own way of doing things and they are never chivvied against their will into doing it some other way.

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INTERVIEWER

Do you think media such as television and motion pictures have had any effect on contemporary literary styles?

WHITE

Television affects the style of children—that I know. I receive letters from children, and many of them begin: "Dear Mr. White, My name is Donna Reynolds." This is the Walter Cronkite gambit, straight out of TV. When I was a child I never started a letter, "My name is Elwyn White." I simply signed my name at the end.

INTERVIEWER

You once wrote that English usage is often "sheer luck, like getting across a street." Could one deduce from this that great writers are also lucky?

WHITE

No, I don't think so. My remark about the ingredient of luck in English usage merely referred to the boghole that every writer occasionally steps into. He begins a sentence, gets into the middle of it, and finds there is no way out short of retracing his steps and starting again. That's all I meant about luck in usage.

INTERVIEWER

Could we ask some questions about humor? Is one of the problems that humor is so perishable?

WHITE

I find difficulty with the word "humor" and with the word "humorist" to peg a writer. I was taken aback, the other day, when I looked in *Who's Who* to discover Frank Sullivan's birthday and found him described as "humorist." It seemed a wholly inadequate summary of the man. Writing funny pieces is a legitimate form of activity, but the durable humor in literature, I suspect, is not the contrived humor of a funnyman commenting on the news but the sly and almost

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imperceptible ingredient that sometimes gets into writing. I think of Jane Austen, a deeply humorous woman. I think of Thoreau, a man of some humor along with his bile.

INTERVIEWER

Dorothy Parker said that S. J. Perelman was the only "humorist" around and that he must be pretty lonely.

WHITE

Perelman is our dean of humor, because he has set such a high standard of writing and has been at it so long. His virtuosity is unchallenged. But he's not the only humorist around. I can't stand the word "humorist" anyway. It does not seem to cover the situation. Perelman is a satirist who writes in a funny way. If you part the bushes, I'm sure you will find somebody skulking there—probably a younger, if not a better, man. I don't know what his name is.

INTERVIEWER

She makes a great distinction between "wit" and "wise-cracking." She said that the satirists were the "big boys—those boys from the other centuries."

WHITE

I agree that satire is the thing but not that it is the property of "other centuries." We have had Wolcott Gibbs, Russell Maloney, Clarence Day, Ring Lardner, Frank Sullivan, Sid Perelman, and Don Marquis, to mention a few. Satire is a most difficult and subtle form of writing, requiring a kind of natural genius. Any reasonably well-educated person can write in a satirical vein, but try and find one that comes off.

INTERVIEWER

You were also an artist. What did Thurber and the other *New Yorker* artists think of your drawings and *New Yorker* covers?

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WHITE

I'm not an artist and never did any drawings for *The New Yorker*. I did turn in a cover and it was published. I can't draw or paint, but I was sick in bed with tonsillitis or something, and I had nothing to occupy me, but I had a cover idea—of a sea horse wearing a nose bag. I borrowed my son's water color set, copied a sea horse from a picture in Webster's dictionary, and managed to produce a cover that was bought. It wasn't much of a thing. I even loused up the whole business finally by printing the word OATS on the nose bag, lest somebody fail to get the point. I suppose the original of that cover would be a collector's item of a minor sort, since it is my only excursion into the world of art. But I don't know where it is. I gave it to Jed Harris. What he did with it, knows God.

INTERVIEWER

You did write the famous caption for the Carl Rose drawing of a mother saying to her youngster: "It's broccoli dear"—with his reply: "I say it's spinach, and I say the hell with it." Why do you think it caused so much reaction as to become, as Thurber said, "part of the American language"?

WHITE

It's hard to say why a certain thing takes hold, as that caption did. The Carl Rose drawing turned up in the office with an entirely different caption—I can't recall what it was, but it had nothing to do with broccoli or spinach. The drawing landed on my desk for recaptioning, and I abandoned the theme of the Rose caption and went off on my own. I can't say why it got into the language. Perhaps it struck a responsive chord with parents who found it true of children, or, more likely, true of what they liked to *think* a child might say under such circumstances.

INTERVIEWER

Many people have said that your wife, Katharine S. White, was the "intellectual soul" of *The New Yorker* in the

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early days, and her enormous influence and contributions have never been recorded adequately.

WHITE

I have never seen an adequate account of Katharine's role with *The New Yorker*. Then Mrs. Ernest Angell, she was one of the first editors to be hired, and I can't imagine what would have happened to the magazine if she hadn't turned up. Ross, though something of a genius, had serious gaps. In Katharine, he found someone who filled them in. No two people were ever more different than Mr. Ross and Mrs. Angell; what he lacked, she had; what she lacked, he had. She complemented him in a way that, in retrospect, seems to me to have been indispensable to the survival of the magazine. She was a product of Miss Winsor's and Bryn Mawr. Ross was a high school dropout. She had a natural refinement of manner and speech; Ross mumbled and bellowed and swore. She quickly discovered, in this fumbling and impoverished new weekly, something that fascinated her: its quest for humor, its search for excellence, its involvement with young writers and artists. She enjoyed contact with people; Ross, with certain exceptions, despised it—especially during hours. She was patient and quiet; he was impatient and noisy. Katharine was soon sitting in on art sessions and planning sessions, editing fiction and poetry, cheering and steering authors and artists along the paths they were eager to follow, learning make-up, learning pencil editing, heading the Fiction Department, sharing the personal woes and dilemmas of innumerable contributors and staff people who were in trouble or despair, and, in short, accepting the whole unruly business of a tottering magazine with the warmth and dedication of a broody hen.

I had a bird's-eye view of all this because, in the midst of it, I became her husband. During the day, I saw her in operation at the office. At the end of the day, I watched her bring the whole mess home with her in a cheap and bulging portfolio. The light burned late, our bed was lumpy with page proofs, and our home was alive with laughter and the pervasive spirit

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of her dedication and her industry. In forty-five years, this dedication has not cooled. It is strong today, although she is out of the running, from age and ill health. Perhaps the nearest thing to an adequate glimpse of her role with the magazine is a collection of books in our upstairs sitting room. They are the published works of the dozens of fiction writers and poets she edited over the years, and their flyleaves are full of words of love and admiration and gratitude. Everyone has a few lucky days in his life. I suspect one of Ross' luckiest was the day a young woman named Mrs. Angell stepped off the elevator, all ready to go to work.

INTERVIEWER

Is there any shifting of gears in writing such children's books as *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*? Do you write to a particular age group?

WHITE

Anybody who shifts gears when he writes for children is likely to wind up stripping his gears. But I don't want to evade your question. There *is* a difference between writing for children and for adults. I am lucky, though, as I seldom seem to have my audience in mind when I am at work. It is as though they didn't exist.

Anyone who writes *down* to children is simply wasting his time. You have to write up, not down. Children are demanding. They are the most attentive, curious, eager, observant, sensitive, quick, and generally congenial readers on earth. They accept, almost without question, anything you present them with, as long as it is presented honestly, fearlessly, and clearly. I handed them, against the advice of experts, a mouse-boy, and they accepted it without a quiver. In *Charlotte's Web*, I gave them a literate spider, and they took that.

Some writers for children deliberately avoid using words they think a child doesn't know. This emasculates the prose and, I suspect, bores the reader. Children are game for anything. I throw them hard words, and they backhand them over the net. They love words that give them a hard time,

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provided they are in a context that absorbs their attention. I'm lucky again: my own vocabulary is small, compared to most writers, and I tend to use the short words. So it's no problem for me to write for children. We have a lot in common.

INTERVIEWER

What are your views about the writer's commitment to politics, international affairs? You have written so much (*The Wild Flag*, etc.) about federal and international issues.

WHITE

A writer should concern himself with whatever absorbs his fancy, stirs his heart, and unlimbers his typewriter. I feel no obligation to deal with politics. I do feel a responsibility to society because of going into print: a writer has the duty to be good, not lousy; true, not false; lively, not dull; accurate, not full of error. He should tend to lift people up, not lower them down. Writers do not merely reflect and interpret life, they inform and shape life.

For a number of years, I was thinking almost continuously about the needless chaos and cruelty of a world that is essentially parochial, composed of more than a hundred parishes, or nations, each spying on the others, each plotting against the others, each concerned almost solely with its own bailiwick and its own stunt. I wrote some pieces about world government, or "supranational" government. I didn't do it from any sense of commitment, I did it because it was what I felt like writing. Today, although I seldom discuss the theme, I am as convinced as I ever was that our only chance of achieving an orderly world is by constructing a governed world. I regard disarmament as a myth, diplomacy as a necessary evil under present conditions, and absolute sovereignty as something to outgrow.

INTERVIEWER

Can you suggest something about the present state of letters, and, perhaps, the future of letters?

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WHITE

I don't suppose a man who hasn't read *Portnoy's Complaint* should comment on the present state of letters. In general, I have no objection to permissiveness in writing. Permissiveness, however, lets down the bars for a whole army of nonwriters who rush in to say the words, take the profits, and foul up the room. Shocking writing is like murder: the questions the jury must decide are the questions of motive and intent.

INTERVIEWER

In a country such as ours, which has become increasingly enamoured of and dependent upon science and technology, what role do you see for the writer?

WHITE

The writer's role is what it has always been: he is a custodian, a secretary. Science and technology have perhaps deepened his responsibility but not changed it. In "The Ring of Time," I wrote: "As a writing man, or secretary, I have always felt charged with the safekeeping of all unexpected items of worldly or unworldly enchantment, as though I might be held personally responsible if even a small one were to be lost. But it is not easy to communicate anything of this nature."

A writer must reflect and interpret his society, his world; he must also provide inspiration and guidance and challenge. Much writing today strikes me as deprecating, destructive, and angry. There are good reasons for anger, and I have nothing against anger. But I think some writers have lost their sense of proportion, their sense of humor, and their sense of appreciation. I am often mad, but I would hate to be nothing but mad: and I think I would lose what little value I may have as a writer if I were to refuse, as a matter of principle, to accept the warming rays of the sun, and to report them, whenever, and if ever, they happen to strike me. One role of the writer today is to sound the alarm. The environment is disintegrating, the hour is late, and not much is being done. Instead of carting rocks from the moon, we should be carting the faeces out of Lake Erie.

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INTERVIEWER

How extensive are the journals you have kept and do you hope to publish them? Could you tell us something of their subject matter?

WHITE

The journals date from about 1917 to about 1930, with a few entries of more recent date. They occupy two-thirds of a whiskey carton. How many words that would be I have no idea, but it would be an awful lot.

The journals are callow, sententious, moralistic, and full of rubbish. They are also hard to ignore. They were written sometimes in longhand, sometimes typed (single spaced). They contain many clippings. Extensive is the word for them. I do not hope to publish them, but I would like to get a little mileage out of them. After so many years, they tend to hold my attention even though they do not excite my admiration. I have already dipped into them on a couple of occasions, to help out on a couple of pieces.

In most respects they are disappointing. Where I would like to discover facts, I find fancy. Where I would like to learn what I did, I learn only what I was thinking. They are loaded with opinion, moral thoughts, quick evaluations, youthful hopes and cares and sorrows. Occasionally, they manage to report something in exquisite honesty and accuracy. This is why I have refrained from burning them. But usually, after reading a couple of pages, I put them aside in disgust and pick up Kilvert, to see what a *good* diarist can do.

INTERVIEWER

Faulkner has written of writers, "All of us failed to match our dreams of perfection." Would you put yourself in this category?

WHITE

Yes. My friend, John McNulty, had a title for a popular song he always intended to write and never did: "Keep your dreams within reason." We both thought this was a very fun-

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ny idea for a song. I still think it is funny. My dreams have never been kept within reason. I'm glad they've not been. And Faulkner was right—all of us failed.

INTERVIEWER

Could you say what those dreams were?

WHITE

No. Here I think you are asking me to be specific, or explicit, about something that is essentially vague and inexpressible. Don Marquis said it perfectly:

My heart has followed all my days
Something I cannot name.

INTERVIEWER

What is it, do you think, when you try to write an English sentence at this date, that causes you to "fly into a thousand pieces." Are you still encouraged (as Ross once wrote you after reading a piece of yours) "to go on."

WHITE

It isn't just "at this date"—I've always been unstable under pressure. When I start to write, my mind is apt to race, like a clock from which the pendulum has been removed. I simply can't keep up, with pen or typewriter, and this causes me to break apart. I think there are writers whose thoughts flow in a smooth and orderly fashion, and they can transcribe them on paper without undo emotion or without getting too far behind. I envy them. When you consider that there are a thousand ways to express even the simplest idea, it is no wonder writers are under a great strain. Writers care greatly how a thing is said—it makes all the difference. So they are constantly faced with too many choices and must make too many decisions.

I am still encouraged to go on. I wouldn't know where else to go.

—GEORGE A. PLIMPTON
—FRANK H. CROWTHER

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Scott Cohen

Loneliness

Here I am, alone in my room, feeling lonely.
Loneliness is horrible. This is an objective
statement. Sometimes I think to objectify
something means to isolate myself from it.
Sometimes when I'm alone I think of you.
You do not seem the type that is ever alone.
I don't feel like watching television or
listening to the radio. There's no one
around to visit. I think I may read Genet's
Our Lady of the Flowers a bit later. I owe
Jack a letter but I don't feel like writing
one now. I'm sure that right now, at this
very moment, thousands of people are feeling
pretty lonely. The knowledge of this is not
very consoling. I have read about lots of
famous men who have spent their lives in
solitude. This isn't very consoling either.
I wonder if there really is something con-
soling to a lonely man. That is, besides
another person. To distract myself I've
written out the line "In the abalone shell
lives the abalone." I'm not sure what an
abalone is except that it has the word
"alone" in it and sounds just like "lonely."
It must really be lonely inside the abalone
shell. This is not an objective statement.
I once read that if you think long enough
about something, you yourself start to take
on the characteristics of that thing. Maybe
I should think of a crowd having a great time.

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But I am thinking about you again. We are having a great time, only I'm feeling sentimental. I'm willing to bet the abalone is not a very sentimental animal. *Webster's New World Dictionary* lists an abalone as a sea mollusk with an oval shell perforated along the rim and lined with mother-of-pearl. The word preceding abalone in Webster's is *abaft*, which is the rear or stern of a ship. I already know the lonely feeling one gets aboard a ship, standing at the stern, late at night, watching the stars drift by. Two words down from *abalone* is the word *abandon*.

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Anne Waldman

* Baby Breakdown *

for Bill Berkson

lumbering logging lonesome

lugging

muggy weather

numbs my brain

ha! (a little shout off the machine
—thanks Van)

separate sounds clapping

(clap clap clap clap clap clap

inside your head

voice line
bass line
treble line
air line

taking off!

you are your head
you are a head
& you are those sounds emanating within

so...

* GO ON LIVING *

(more! more! more! more!)

heh! that guitar just jumped from one ear to the other

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& THE GREAT ATLANTIC CABLE IS FREAKING OUT!

please don't use that word "freaking" not again

Okay

The Great Atlantic Cable is nodding out

tho it's not the same thing at all

PU AT IN ON YO EMS

(trans: Put that in one of your poems,

Anne I think he said

& so I did
& so it is
& so what?

so what?

did you say so what?

good morning baby
baby good night

good morning baby
baby good night

good night baby
baby good baby

good morning morning
baby good morning

good baby baby
baby good good

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good night good morning
good night good night

good baby good
good baby baby

night baby morning
night baby night

night night night
morning baby morning

baby baby baby
baby baby baby

morning morning night
night baby morning

baby night baby
morning morning morning

goodbye baby
baby bye bye

good baby morning
good baby night

baby table
baby chair
baby wall
baby bed

we're gonna stay here forever so don't wait up

don't get claustrophobic either

there's a lot of space if you look in the right places

* (between the lines!) *

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looked & looked

o rapture & destr

o phantom brain wha ?

& then something took hold of me

no, not a baby arm

I think it was the BIG REALITY

(disguised as a baby)

Lord Lord Lord
I'm so tired

Now I'm not

now I am

can't decide

disaster button
dilemma cushion

here,

have a seat in the Magic Tree

It'll give you a whole new "take" on the situation

if you're ready

I'm sitting here in a completely new place myself tonight

closer to nature

the good-natured "close"

with a heavy thought on my brain

it weighs 20 lbs at least

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& has no place to go except the top

So

if you see me tomorrow help me out from under

into the air of your kind gaze

(Bill)

warmth surrounds the circle as you cheer them on, em on

*

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Ted Berrigan

Heroin

for Jim Carroll

(2) photos of Anne

80 years old

lovely, as always

a child

under an old fashion

duress

A Bibliography of Works
by Jack Kerouac

A white suit
and a black dress
w/ high-necked
mini-skirt

strolling

two by two

across a brown paper bag

above The Relation Ship

Warm white thighs & floating bend giá pronto

my heart is filled with light

al curry

Life
that is
one, tho
the Lamps

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be many & proud & there's a breeze sort of
lightly moving the top

of yr head
& I'm going
way over
the White
skyline

& I'll do
what I want to

& you can't keep me here

no how

& the streets are theirs now
& the tempos
& the space.

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Peace

What to do
when the days' heavy heart
having risen, late
in the already darkening East
& prepared at any moment to sink into the West
surprises suddenly,
& settles, for a time,
at a lovely place
where mellow light spreads
evenly
from face to face?
The days' usual aggressive
contrary beat
now softly dropped
into a regular pace
the head riding gently its personal place
where pistons feel like legs
on feelings met like lace.
Why,
take a walk, then,
across this town. It's a pleasure
to meet the one certain person you've been counting on
to take your measure
who will smile, & love you, sweetly, at your leisure.
And if
she turns your head around
like any other man,
go home
and make yourself a sandwich
of toasted bread, & ham
with butter
lots of it
& have a diet cola,
& sit down
& write this,
because you can.

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Lewis Warsh

Drops

17 floors
above 8th Avenue
in an apartment in 1962

The Bronx—very mysterious
old girl-friends come into view

an essay I wrote
"On Autumn" when
I was a junior in highschool

a small town in upstate New York: Old Forge
population: 500 52 miles from Utica, 27
from Booneville, 12 from Inlet summer
retreat for "left-wing" schoolteachers who were
blacklisted in the early fifties

The phone just rang—it was Anne
in Millville, New Jersey

Old girlfriends: Susan Lazar, Allegra
David, Diana Reed—where are you?

Far Rockaway
the summer "A Hard
Days Night" opened
in New York

10th between A & B
"I'm leaving home, mom"
& took off down the street
in the back of a VW bus

Castle Hill—one of the
worst places of all time

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Living with Harris
in the dorm at Colorado University
Boulder, 1960

The Dodgers win the World Series, 1965

Feeling nuts, like
I was going to flip out
for the first time

Harlem
the night Malcolm X died

Not many interesting jobs I can think of

3
rooms
for
$59

The St Mark Arms
of 112 street
between B'way & Amsterdam

Mugged but never busted

Lying on the grass
in Central Park, Tompkins Square
Washington Square & Van Cortland; &
Golden Gate Park, Bronx, Inwood & Hyde Park

le Bois de Boulogne

What do you feel like
doing tonight? Are you
thinking about anything
interesting? Read any good
books lately? Seen any movies?

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A box
containing
Anne's letters
from Bennington

doubt about everything

A loft
in the Fillmore
San Francisco, 1963; an

apartment on Nob Hill
two years later

33 St Marks Place—another
drop in the bucket

A conversation
last night with Bill
about growing old

The inevitable outcome of marriage is babies!

To be totally naked

To be sitting here
reading these poems to you
totally naked

which is what I am—totally naked

5/69

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Laurance Wieder

These Anemones, Their Song Is Made Up As They Float Along

In 1954, in June
I saw a total eclipse of the sun by the moon.
I saw the flowers fold up, the birds
Stopped singing to the morning, the grass
Grew wet, and it was dark.
I was awake, but when I was awake
A while longer I woke up and said
"I have slept until now," and now
I have stopped sleeping altogether.

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Tradition and the Individual Talent: the "Bratislava Spiccato"

Harry Mathews

In August 1877 the celebrated conductor Jenö Szenkar, who six weeks earlier had gone to Graz to visit his friend the violinist Benno Bennewitz, and incidentally to perform with him the cycle of the Beethoven violin sonatas, left that city for Budapest, where he was engaged to conduct two operas at the summer festival. This was the Jenö Szenkar whose wife's elder brother was the grandfather of Geza Anda. Benno Bennewitz for his part was Teresa Stich-Randall's maternal great-grandfather, and his niece was Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's mother. Szenkar's stay in Graz had been motivated not by professional reasons but by concern for his health. The winter in Vienna had been a grueling one, since he not only had been chief conductor at the Staatsoper but had prepared several concerts with the Philharmonic Orchestra: it was in connection with the latter responsibility that he had become involved in bitter public controversy with Ludwig Krumpholz (who, much later, was Hermann Scherchen's godfather) over the performance of the cadenzas in Joseph-Leopold Pitsch's posthumous piano concerto. Pitsch's widow, the following year, was to marry Karl Knappertsbusch and by him bear the father of Hans Knappertsbusch. The unexpected battle with Krumpholz had lessened the benefits brought him by the assistance of young Franz Mittag. (Mittag as an infant had shared a wetnurse with Irmgaard Dehn, for whom her granddaughter Irmgaard Seefried was named.) This was no fault of Mittag: he had done brilliant work, and thanks to the impression he then made he was named only two years later to the directorship of the opera, after a year's interim under the aging Julius Meyer-Remy, the great-grandfather of both

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Hugo Meyer-Welfing and Mrs. Rudolph Bing. Szenkar had finished the season in a state of exhaustion, and he had dearly counted on his sojourn in Graz to restore him. The concerts with Bennewitz required little exertion—playing the piano was for him a pastime, he loved his fiddler friend, it was the best kind of busman's holiday. His hopes of recovery, however, were disappointed, for he had hardly been in Budapest a week when he died, felled by a stroke during a rehearsal of *Childe Harold*. This now-forgotten opera was by Bela Hubay, whose great-grandson married Georg Szell's sister.

Szenkar was much loved in Budapest, and although he was taken for burial to his home town of Kaposvar, the city put on a grand memorial service for him. To this event many musicians came from all over Central Europe.

Among them was the Czech violinist Vaclav Czegka. The Czegkas have of course always been a central force in the musical life of their country—Rafael Kubelik is Vaclav Czegka's great-great-nephew. A lifelong friend of Szenkar, of whom he was a little the senior, Czegka undertook the trip to Budapest without hesitation, but not without misgiving, for his own health was frail. Accordingly he sent a telegram to his son František (who would three years later marry Clara Riemenschneider, the grandmother of Inge Borkh), a musician himself, then touring in Klagenfurt: he should journey at once to Györ, where he would join his father, who would thus not have to travel alone all the way from Brno to Budapest. It should perhaps be mentioned that Czegka had lived by himself since the death of his wife the year before. She had been born a Kalliwoda, a family to which Rudolph Firkušny is related.

During the train ride a certain line of thought that Czegka had been following for many months at last reached its conclusion. It had started at the very performance by Krumpholz of the Pitsch concerto that had given Szenkar such trouble. Through an adroit combination of pedaling and touch Krumpholz had demonstrated a novel effect, that of making the hammers "bounce drily" on the strings. Czegka had then begun wondering whether the violin bow could not produce

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a similar effect. He had pondered, he had experimented, above all he had discussed the matter daily with his son-in-law, the cellist Jan Sevčik. (Through her remarriage with László Thoman, Sevčik's mother would have a grandson who was second cousin once removed of Ferenc Fricsay and first cousin twice removed of Sandor Vegh.) Before their discussions could bear fruit, Sevčik had left for Ljubljana, where he was engaged to play with Gustav Henschkel (Clemens Krauss's maternal grandfather) and Friedrich Rheinberger. It was on this occasion that Rheinberger met Olga Czerny (no relation), whom he later married and by whom he had several children, none of them musical. Rheinberger's sister, however, was Wolfgang Windgassen's grandmother, and one of his brothers was throughout their school years the best friend of Wolfgang Schneiderhan's grandfather.

It was as his train pulled into the Bratislava station that Vaclav Czegka discovered how the desired "dry bounce" could be realized. Such was his astonishment that he cried out, and under the strain of that cry he felt his old heart falter. He looked around for a confidant to whom, in case the worst happened, he might entrust his secret. No one besides a very old lady shared his compartment. He strode the length of his car but only traveling salesmen, governesses with children, and other hopeless cases were to be seen. Unwisely he leaped from the train onto the station platform, and doing so felt a surge of darkness within him. The platform was empty except for a middle-aged rabbi. Czegka staggered toward him, fell on his knees, and managed to gasp out his discovery before his heart quite collapsed.

The rabbi, who had, although he was Russian, a good grasp of German, was Nathan Milstein's father. Returning to St. Petersburg, he repeated what he had learned to a professor at the Conservatory, Boris Zaremba. (He was the great-uncle both of Boris Khaikin and, through a niece's Roumanian marriage, Boris Christoff.)

These facts supply a partial explanation of the excellence of Russian violinists in the twentieth century, and clarify the origins of the controversial expression "Bratislava spiccato."

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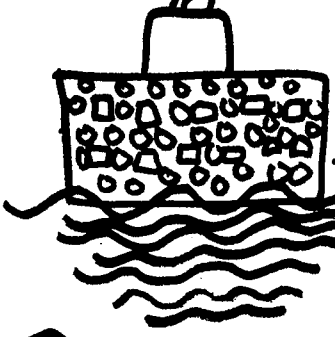
Dear Diana

I had a marvelous time on the

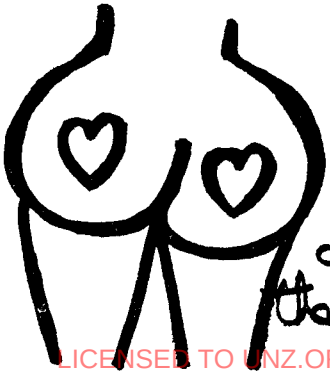


FRANC

← we danced every night until 4

pills

had to take my diet pills



gained 5 lbs around hips the food was so goo

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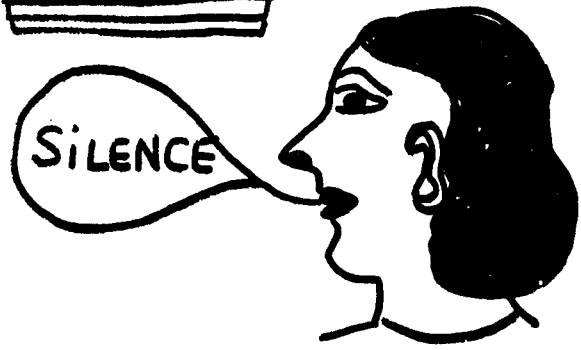
← met a very good looking boy called SAM

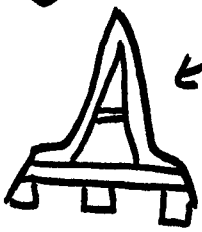


↑ he never said a word but my God he was beautiful for a week

PARIS ↔ Love

1 Really flipped

↑ stayed only a few days too expensive



← eifel tower

→ over

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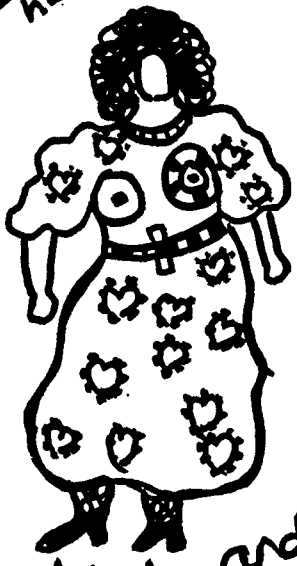
then LONDON WU



went to Carnaby street and bought the shortest mini and a smashing maxie.

he didn't talk much but what a dream! Lucky you didn't see him first

met David in a Pub spent a few wild nights together

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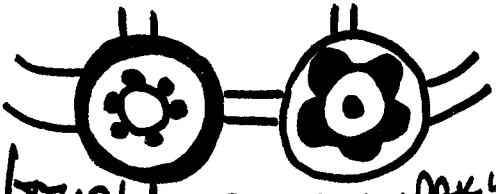
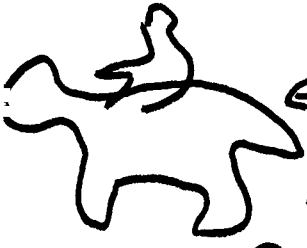
chianti

that Italian food FABULASH MAN!

9 million times better than those postcards



bought a new sexy brassiere



I really freaked out when I saw that statue of the guy on a horse!

turban

met Pierre here a Frenchman who had just come back from India such a beautiful person

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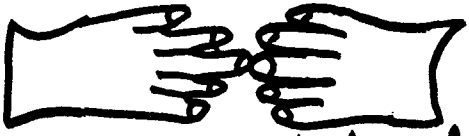
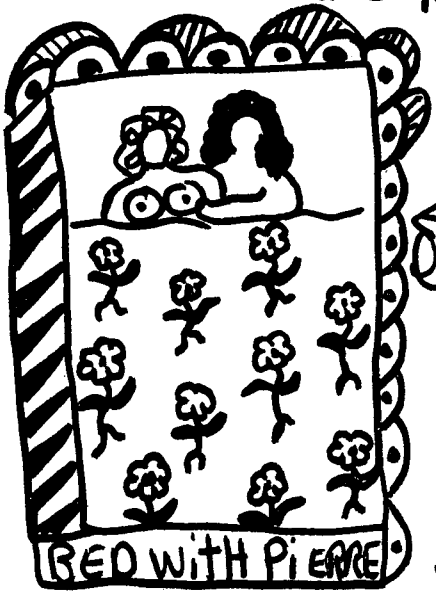
5

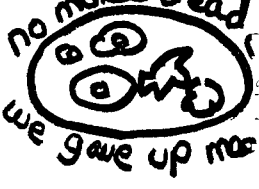
← Pierre kissed me last night



we held hands for 3 hours while he told me all about the revolution



← we are living together now



threw away all my clothes and started dressing Indian like Pierre.

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Pierre has gone home to get some money from his parents

100 FRANCS
MONEY

Turned on in Marrakech

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I got terrific clothes in the Souk

the snake charm
the acrobats
the tooth pulling
games with pigeons
and flowers of love
and death
Berber dancers
etc. ect. It
blew my mind

taking our
1st acid
trip together
in the desert
feeling small
caves and
nature.

Pierre and ME
(he joined me!)

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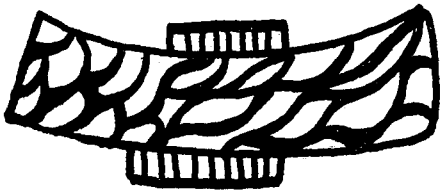
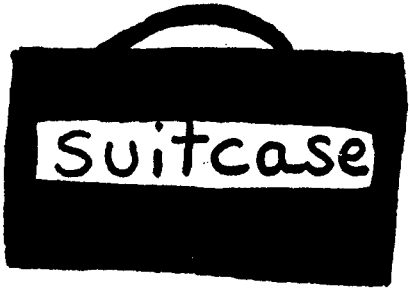
8



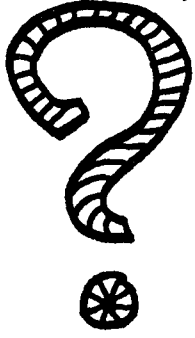
Belt I bought for you



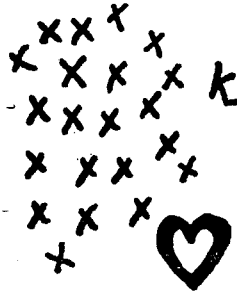
I'm coming home alas!

no more $

Diana what shall I do?



I have to go back to that boring 8 hour a day job.



kisses for you

can't wait to see you

P.S.

love Anne

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9

P.S.

Pierre and I split
met someone new

The Plot to Save the World

Michael Brownstein

Not too long ago in the hills of our fatherland, on hill 311 to be exact, there lived a young girl divided into three parts: one part rock candy, one part fervent hope, and one part creative seclusion.

This girl spent the final years of her childhood perfecting a foolproof and at the same time fair system for the national lottery. She also developed a cheaper way to stamp coins and was the first person to reject microfilm storage of information using laser beams in favor of simple reliance upon memory banks honed to maximum flow in and minimum flow out. Through discoveries in the field of biochemistry so brilliant as to seem obvious she translated the metaphor of human-life-as-movie into actual biological fact, thereby opening the way to organ and gland transplant by means of the relatively simple and easily learned techniques of film editing. Acting on a hunch, she was able in one short day to revolutionize the scope of human sexual and creative energy through an elementary "sidetrack" process, whereby the *time* any particular act consumed, if thought of in terms of *space*, was reduced drastically, since most of these acts involved very little movement—such as sitting down, lying down, spreading out, and so on.

Although certainly not the first girl to visit France, she was perhaps the first to put into workable algebraic function the girlish realization that France "really is unique," that although this uniqueness was on the wane it could be preserved once

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changed into an immutable mathematical formula—and that what held true for France would also hold true for any nation or cultural bloc. So that, finally, each national identity could disappear in one sense (something which, she realized, was inevitable anyway) only to pop up again in another more permanent one, in a form obviously requiring no politicians, human blood sacrifice, or waste of time...

She astonished the world by her observations on trees as regulators of electricity, as possible media for electrical communications, and on the world-wide disasters which the clearing off of forests to make paper is likely to occasion... Her solitary walks in the Black Forest and the Blue Ridge Mountains opened to her new and original views on the harmonies of creation.

During the one or two hours before her bedtime set aside for leisure she painted, composed and played electronic music, and revolutionized the field of night photography... And two nights before her eleventh birthday she finally trapped and killed what had been her most elusive *bête noire*, namely sleep: not to avoid it, of course, but how could it be activated, how could sleep in its own way be made to stand up and contribute? Discarding the possibility of somehow "using" her body while it slept, she realized with sudden intuition as she woke up shouting that night from what had been only the third nightmare of her life that, through firm and patient training, two very striking things could be accomplished. One, the virtual elimination of subsidiary dream figures, and also non-human dream figures except for those coming under the heading of "landscape" or general atmosphere. Two, the selection and training of *principal* dream figures to the point where, as highly accomplished laboratory assistants, research scholars, typists, lathe operators, etc., they could be given increasingly complex problems and tasks related to those the girl herself was working on... So that after only a few months' time she was able to wake up every morning several days ahead of herself, with solutions to problems she had only just formulated the night before.

She was in addition an excessively good-looking and of

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course widely read young lady, and, anticipating before she was twelve the loss of time and sour moods resulting from body repression, she initiated a fine relationship with a boy from one of the nearby hills, a publisher's son. Usually, when leaving to go home after sharing her love, he would take with him the manuscript for her next technical paper or book, also relaying any pressing messages to the outside world and generally acting as her go-between and all-purpose factotum.

To gain the necessary psychological perspective on the world in which she lived, she participated in or observed one orgy, one coup d'état, one manic depression, one sunny day, one rest home, one sheep slaughter, one anonymous phone call, one transvestite, one sales-pitch, one workers' commune, one sleeping village, one alpine meadow, one computer analyst, one wind tunnel, one savage domestic squabble, one happy family, one bigot and one small favor...

Since her uncle, moreover, was President of the Fatherland, she luckily avoided that stubborn resistance to fundamental change—to new ideas—which has been the proverbial stumbling block and torment of so many highly original minds throughout human history. She merely had to formulate an idea to have it thoroughly and objectively tested and, more often than not, speedily adopted. Her unbearable fame spread far and wide, very fast, while at the same time she managed to keep it from spreading to her head in the form of exaggerated self-importance. Contrary to what was expected, the rate of her discoveries and their uncontested value and profundity sharply increased rather than leveling off or dropping, so that by the time she was fourteen innovations of the first order were being explained, tested, and put into practice at the rate of three a week...

A persistent high-pitched hum could be heard in the valleys and meadows surrounding hill 311. That peculiar light and heat denoting exceptional psychic activity began to dominate the landscape, radiating out from the domed roofs of her compound like the gradual unfolding of some staggering cosmic theory. Neighbors who resisted falling under her influence for a short period of time talked of leaving the area

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and resettling elsewhere. They complained that their children were losing interest in toys and the mindless games of childhood and were spending more and more time alone in their rooms, or off wandering the hills at all hours of the day and night, filling notebook after notebook with "pointless gibberish" and organizing spontaneous talk fests, lasting hours, from which all adults were excluded... A concerned mother would force her way into one of these sessions only to be greeted by a stony silence, followed by the restless scraping of tiny chairs. Eventually the children would leave, or sometimes one of them would produce a baseball or Monopoly set and they would begin to play, quietly looking over their shoulders at the mother until she felt she was intruding on nothing, as it were, and subsequently left, swiping at the tears as they formed on her cheeks with the back of a trembling hand.

But those neighbors who on the contrary didn't feel threatened by the power emanating from the top of the hill, never felt better. The wives found that perhaps for the first time since girlhood they were happily occupied, spending their afternoons hoeing earth and improvising the complicated flower gardens that began to appear throughout the neighborhood, spilling down the slopes before their homes... Some of these women got carried away to the point of converting every square inch of their lawns to a succession of enormous words spelled out by various flowers that bloomed from early spring to late autumn. Words like FASCINATION, INSPIRATION, and LUCK, or phrases such as LOVE ME, I AM GOD, and TOUCH MY TRIGGER began appearing everywhere, composed of tulip beds, hyacinths and roses—of carnations, zinnias, and sunflowers—running in large suffocating clumps from the front porch to the street below. The words were programmed to change as new flowers came into bloom. LOVE ME after a period of several weeks would become LOVE MY SHORTCOMINGS TOO, although for the most part these gardens were given over to huge single words—BEAUTY, for example, was a great favorite—spelled out in different colors as the summer progressed... Soon

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every house within a radius of two or three miles of where the young girl lived was surrounded by these obsessive, charming patterns. The wives would finish a day of strenuous labor with their bodies hardened and their spirits ready for the humble chores of dinner and the delirious chores of love.

But they also had to learn the virtue of patience, because their husbands, upon returning home from work, found themselves retiring to their workrooms or tool sheds as soon as dinner was over. There, surrounded by a clutter of tools and technical manuals, these middle-aged men experienced a resurgence of the blinding enthusiasm of early youth. Before the young girl's psychic energy affected them they had spent their evenings staring into television screens and darkly guzzling endless cans of beer. Now they suddenly began planning additions to the house, working on a new patio or even teaching themselves a little mechanical engineering in order to implement the unprecedented rush of "bright ideas" they had for some new labor-saving contrivance. As time went on they found themselves working in electronics, microbiology or structural design. One man, for example, invented a new and much sleeker miniature hull for ocean-going yachts, allowing yachtsmen to use the space formerly taken up by a ship's hull to carry more supplies, servants, and young orphan girls with their rucksacks and diaries, happy for a free chance to see the world. Another, a bus driver by trade, found a way to combine television, phonograph, telephone and refrigerator into a single master appliance that pointed the way to a sort of transistorized domestic unit promising a revolution in the technology of everyday life.

Others, more ambitious, brought their new-found lucidity to bear upon problems of psychology and the bewildering gamut of human emotions. They began to tackle such lumbering enigmas as—what, precisely, is the nature of ambition? what, if any, is the relationship between an individual's facial structure and his capacity for mental concentration? why do "perfectly healthy" people the world over find themselves just sitting around? etc.

Meanwhile, on hill 311, the young girl's dizzying rate of

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activity continued non-stop. She knew the precise extent of her own mental and physical energy and was careful to stop work as soon as it was totally depleted. Those neighbors, however, who were especially advanced in their work found themselves irresistibly drawn to her side as if in a trance, to collaborate and to learn, and she couldn't refuse them. She knew they were an extension of her own vital energy...

The hum from the hill grew louder as increasing numbers of these men spent more and more time on hill 311 with the girl, skipping supper and sometimes not even returning home at night. They would appear the next day at the breakfast table, haggard and shaking from exhaustion, but determined to drink some coffee and go off to their regular jobs. Their wives, by the way, thought all this was "just marvelous," and some of them spent the long evenings making sandwiches which they would take up the hill at one or two o'clock in the morning, only to find the girl and her followers collapsed around the work tables in her cavernous laboratory...

Suddenly the hum became unbearably painful to hear, as it turned into the siren-like wail of what amounted to a small town, all of whose inhabitants were expending their last shred of mental energy, at work upon a single task. This in turn spread its magnetism further and further across the countryside, until people numbering in the tens of thousands began planting gardens and working in their tool sheds, only to abandon these projects at a certain point and migrate to hill 311. The girl's last report to the outside world came just before the sound became deafening and her hill was wracked and destroyed by a catastrophic series of earth-shaking tremors. She enthusiastically announced a plan, which she said was "at this moment being successfully implemented," to mobilize the fragmented mental energy of the countless individuals wandering the globe into one mighty, disciplined outburst of scientific achievement, with which the whole world could be instantaneously and completely transformed.

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Dimmer

Joy Williams

I

Mal Vester had a pa who died in the Australian desert after drinking all the water from the radiator of his Land Rover. His momma had died just like the coroner said she had, even though he had lost the newspaper clipping that would have proved it. Not lost exactly. He had folded up the story and put it in the pocket of his jeans for one year and one half straight because they were the only pants he had and the paper had turned from print into lint and then into the pocket itself and then the jeans had become as thin and as grey as the egg skins his momma had put over his boils when he was little.

He still had the jeans—spread out flat on the bottom of his suitcase but they were just a rag really, not even a rag but just a few threads insufficient even to cover up a cat hit in the street.

The coroner, in absolving anyone or everyone of guilt in Mal's mother's death, had stated to the press, represented by a lean young man in a black suit with a nose blue and huge as a Doberman pinscher, that

> the murky water and distance from
> the shore precluded adequate wit-
> nessing of the terminal event. If
> the victim were in the process of
> having her upper extremity avulsed
> by a large fish she would have had
> little opportunity to wave or to

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render an intelligent vocal appraisal of her dealings at that particular moment... Death being unavoidable and by misadventure...

Mal thought the wording cold but swell.

Everyone had thought she was mucking about. It was dusk and there were hundreds on the beach...cooking their meat, the children eating ice-cream pies, the old ones staring into the sun. There was a man washing his greyhounds in a tidal pool. The water was cold and pale, flecked with filthy foam, green like the scum of a chicken stewing. Mal was in the cottage, fixing supper, pouring hot water over the jello powder, browning the moki in the skillet oil, and next door Freddie Gomkin was burning out another clutch as he tried to coax his car up and over the hill to the flat races in Sydney.

It certainly did not seem at the time that anyone could be dying. It was not the season. It was Durban's season.

And no one was really paying any attention. She was by herself in water no deeper than her ribs, 100 feet down the beach from the public conveniences. And she disappeared. Someone later said that they thought they saw her disappearing. But they saw no fin. Blood came shoreward in a little patch, bright and neat as a paper plate. The only thing that Mal Vester had to go on of course was that she never came back. A few days later, someone caught a tiger shark and when they cut it open, there was a bathing costume stamped with a laundry mark wrapped round its intestine. But the laundry mark was traced to a Mrs. Annie White of Toowoomba who was still alive and who worked in a doll hospital.

After it happened, he was unsure that it hadn't. He lay in the cottage and didn't know what to do. His mother had always hated the water because she could not swim and because she was convinced that people pissed in it all the time. This had become a minor obsession with her. She went all white and shaky when she saw the women sitting on the sandbank, their legs stretched out into the waves, the water rattling in between their thighs. Mal was eleven and she held him close.

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The beach was no place to bring up a fatherless child by god she always said. Snorkels and men spitting. Women shuffling behind towels, dropping their clothes. Bleeding and coughing. Hair everywhere and rotting sandwiches. Unmentionables coming in with the tide.

He lay on a rolling cot and struck his hips with a loose fist. The moki was dumped charred into the sink. The clocks ran down. He moped about the cottage, practically starving to death while he thought of his mother and how she smelled. She had sung to him—all the American hits—

> There ain't nothing in the world
> But a boy and a girl
> And love, love, love...

Accompanying herself with salad spoons. It had not been long ago that he had squirmed between her breasts, chewing on a smooth flat dug, smelling food, night spent somewhere by something in the branches. It was like sucking a penny.

Nothing ever came to him directly. Nothing occurred outright. The things that had changed him were blurred and discreet and this gave the life that yet remained for him to live a strange unwieldiness and improbability. Death was not thorough. It had no clean edges to it. And all that love and responsibility left behind—mewing and forever lost.

II

> The spleen weighs 150 Gm. The capsule
> is wrinkled, thin and red-purple. The
> cut surface shows vascular congestion.
> The lymph nodes and bone marrow are not
> remarkable. The liver weighs 1500 Gm.
> It is red-brown, smooth and glistening.

They had been farming in the desert for one year; the man tall and ropey-limbed with the studs of his blue jeans shining around his hips and the heels of his boots making broad coffin holes in the sand; the woman sulky, pulling spinifex spines out of her skinny legs, rubbing her soiled ankles. She nearly

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drove him mad, wanting him to press his ear against her belly to hear the heart beat. Sometimes hit was and sometimes hit weren't, he told her. Sometimes hit growled at him like any old mutt. She'd been eating wormy flour and was imagining things. She'd only gained three pounds.

But she was sure. The wolf, hating emptiness, fills his belly with mud and then disgorges it when he finds food. The woman hates emptiness. The woman is a glass waiting to be filled and her belly is heavy with hope before the seed. For a time, little Mal had been blood and air and sour dough, but then her breasts were swinging with yellow milk. She dreamt of things that her man had never told her. She dreamt of snow which she had never seen. She dreamt of eating books and knew that someone would die soon.

Mal himself, one noon, had dropped early from the womb with a full head of hair and a face white and soft as a candle dripping but what they believed to be his baby chortlings were only the mice clicking and ticking in the stove. For days he had no features at all. For weeks he still seemed unborn, his little eyes all pupil and of a peculiar green like something wedged in a privy crack, the bones growing beneath his face like weeds.

His eyes stayed funny. They were not strong and they were somehow ill-timed like a gesture of empty hands. His momma said that the heat and the weather had wrecked her honey's eyes just as the heat and the weather had wrecked her fine bone-handled hairbrush. She said that her honey's eyes were weak because his daddy had never quit doing with her.

His momma told him things were never what they seemed so it made no difference anyhow how much his eyes could see.

The man was never there in daylight and the child's only memory of him were his jeans, hanging on a hook, the leather boots not quite touching the floor, like the boots of a hanged man, extending up to the empty knee sockets, the jeans being plastered inside the boots by sweat and greasy creek clay, the cloth stringy in the hide. At night the child saw the pale torso quivering over his mother while the hips and legs dangled in shadow on the wall, and he saw it drop soundlessly like a

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white bird turning out of a storm.

In the morning he was not there. Only his mouth was on the taste of the fork stabbed into a pan of fatty mutton.

One night he was brought back dead on the haunch of a horse. The horse's legs were like the stems of tall flowers in the moonlight and the child could see that his throat had turned blue and that his brain had risen up and come out of a rent in his skull, hanging outside, white and lacy stiff like the coral sold in Sydney shops. Little Mal rubbed his eyes with ragged nails and the sight swung to the left and disappeared. He opened his mouth wide and stuffed the curtain in, kneeling on his mattress, frail scabby child with warm and gritty hair and he saw them truss his father up in canvas and bury him in the ground.

In daylight he dug on the other side of the house. For what if he should search and find nothing? What if there should be no grave full?

III

The heart weighs 350 Gm. There
is dilation of both chambers.
The superior and inferior venae
cavae, portal and hepatic veins
are patent. The valvular measure-
ments are within normal limits.
The myocardium is a homogeneous
red-brown.

He was an orphan with no distant kin and the house on the harbor began to smell like a kennel. He was eleven and a half and he began drinking gin, threatening motorists by falling in front of their cars. Being loved had taken up more time than he would have ever thought possible. His hair and legs grew long. His teeth became furry as stones in a brook. He ate his bread by the sea and cast the crusts upon the water. The world was Mal's grey graveyard and the rain ran into the sea

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from a sky pale as a winding sheet. The rain rang and sang off the prawners' slick jackets. It drummed upon the sand and upon his bony jaw.

For Mal had learned in his brief joyless life that nothing is faithful and that one needn't have a body to be able to mourn, for death is everywhere. Cyanide fills the peach pit. Meningitis in a napkin fold and polio on the wet shower boards. Eternity is in the evening air.

He read in a book that King Henry died from over-eating lampreys and that Princess Kristila succumbed from under-eating greens. There's no way to account for people's tastes. He read in the *Sun* that a farmer had a stroke in his pigpen and not a trace was found. Just his hat and a sack of untouched corn. There's no way to account for the taste of things.

At night he would have noisy odorous and colorful nightmares that would hurl him out of bed and into the wall. He would trot to and fro in the dark, tiny rhumba steps, his toes curled in the cold, his long yellow nails cracking against debris. At last his mind would clear and he would not be able to remember what had frightened him so.

For the most part, people were kind to him. They smiled at him and didn't smash his windows. Occasionally they left something in a covered dish or a sealed jar on the window ledge. But they were uneasy about him. He had a great absence of presence—a horrorful past, an uncertain future. He ran and the dust kicked up on the roadway, hissing like the rain on a searing day.

And it became spring and Mal was pubescent. He needed razor blades. He was very lean and the lack of love lay open on his face like a wound. Even though he smelled like a melon and was skittery as a bat, the girls found him attractive with his thick pretty hair and his way of chewing gum. His boy moanings were heard as he ran through the groves of kurajong trees. He was seen to have pollen in his hair.

It was spring and for days there was a black, large and silent dog sitting in front of his cottage. He had dug his paws deeply into the murky lawn, his tail fell in the direction of the sea, his haunches were hairy and drooping like ferns. The dog was

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very polite and very silent but he was regarded suspiciously by everyone and taken as a bad sign. No one had ever seen the dog before. He was a stranger and black as oblivion. Mal Vester never seemed to notice him which made them believe that the animal was his doom and gloomy future, visible because unavoidable. The dog was waiting for a bitch in heat. When the bitch didn't present herself, the dog went away. He was very polite and from another town, but by that time, everyone was convinced that he was not a normal dog.

Mal Vester was fourteen and he switched from gin to rye. Rice from weddings, confetti from the holidays were deep in his thick yellow hair. He went everywhere unasked in a soft sweater too small for him and trousers unraveling at the crotch. He sewed them up with red thread which was all he had. He wore a grey shirt buttoned at the throat and a string tie held by a steer raised from tin. He had bruises beneath his eyes. In the homes with young daughters, fathers lay sleepless and frantic, for when need is on the loose, running like a hungry hound, how does one protect the loved from love?

Freddie Gomkin's wife, who had a face like an ewe, gave birth to twins in January, when everyone knew that poor Fred had been gelded in the war...and gassed...and that he had a plate in his head and a glass eye and rubber bags hanging inside the clothes he wore. They knew that he was hardly a survivor at all. His only lusts were two—for dying and a winning pony—but he was happy with his heirs. He gave a party with brandy and beer, and although he didn't say a word, one could tell that he was pleased with the way his life was moving along, each day with its noon and now all those noons behind him, the days being maneuvered properly and with skill, his life moving along just like a real life, just like anybody's.

Mal was not invited but he came, with the water slapped onto his hair running into his ears, crouched with his elbows on the heating unit, gathering up the room with his slovenly eyes. The brandy rocked like mud in the paper cups. The wife smiled, the tip of her tongue curving shyly before her bad teeth. Mal wanted to see the twins but he was told by some-

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one that they were in the pantry sleeping. The door was not hung properly but was pulled shut all the same with wadded newspapers sealing up the spaces. Otherwise the house was neat and bright and the sun shone in all the corners. The floor was white as a tub with sunlight. There were no bugs or rats. There were no hairs on the women's chins or dried nostril grime on the men. Everyone was there dressed soberly in brown and white—white shirts and dresses and faces and hands, brown trousers and beads and boots and hair—brown and white and moving like a bread pudding.

But there was no sign of the babies. No prints or droppings. No bark torn off the rough pine walls. Or cloth snagged on a splintered seat.

They all had brought gifts but none were being used right. Mal had brought an empty egg painted in bright colors with a string run through the pin holes. He imagined that the babies could bat it with their hands. But Freddie's wife had hung it on the Christmas tree, which was still up but dropping, falling but not over, pale as wheat now, incongruous, leaning like a person ill at ease, the berries strung there rotting. The egg rolled back and forth in the air. The needles clicked as they struck the floor.

The young girls bent over the twins' toy that lay by the sink on the breadboard. Something furry—a rabbit's foot. They drank hot sugared water, giggled at the spot where Mal was drinking his brandy down.

"A door is not a door until it's closed," Mal kindly thought, squinting at the colored funnies that hid his nest of young. The papers were old and crumbling. The news was history. The missing persons, listed in rows tiny and in code like the cricket scores, had all been found.

"Oh what is there about him that makes him so worthwhile..." the young girls thought, their legs twitching and joggling below their laps.

Everyone was ogling the spot where he was as though they wanted to sit there too but wouldn't. Mal swallowed his brandy, pushing his face deep inside the cup. He licked the bottom dry and put it down. He was sorry for the babies in

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the black pantry, rocking in their cribs like corn. Had they destroyed the babies he had made? Had she taken his sack of seed, tied it up and chucked it out as she would the gizzard bag in the pit of a grocery hen?

He walked away. No one said good-bye.

IV

> The kidneys are equal in size
> and shape. The capsules strip
> with ease. The esophageal mucosa
> is grey-white. No food is present
> other than a few intact, cooked
> beans.

The day had been very blue and the sea black but now the sea became blue and fearful like a shotgun's bore and the sky became black and scuddy with clouds. The water in the harbor began to pitch and foam as though it were about to give up its dead. Mal was pushed into town by the wind and he stood in a doorway and watched the storm. The doorway led to a mud-room and the mud-room to a cheap restaurant, filled with cowboys and wax flowers. The chaps of the cowboys smacked wetly as they walked. Little pieces of food flew in the air between them as they talked. The place was warm and steamy and stank of sheep. He sat at a tiny table for two in a corner by the window and a running toilet. No one bothered Mal Vester. No one asked for his order.

He was the only guest who was not a cowboy. Never had he wanted to be a cowboy. The cowboys were chewing and laughing and cutting the wire stems of the plastic flowers with their huge pocket knives. They threw the flowers at one another and entwined them in their lank and dripping hair. The knives turned and sawed white and watery like fish and the flowers fell clumsily into their hands and then onto the soaked and puddled floor. Wool had become embedded in the wounds of their fingers, spun out black and coarse like a

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paw's webbing. The blood of lambs lay caked beneath their nails.

On their dark arms they had tattoos. Legends of roses and tigers. Puce needle diggings. Stain of capillaries. The muscled petals that women love to touch.

But who knows what good might come from the least of us? From the bones of old horses is made the most beautiful Prussian blue.

It rained and rained. Mal wrung out his cuffs and watched the dim day through the steamy window. Someone had written a word on the glass. NICE, it said. The street was buckling. The rain was clattering like teeth in a cold mouth. Swings moved between poles in the park without children and the sea slammed against the pilings and carried off the crabs. Everything in the world was slick and trembling like a gland, like something gutted, roped and dangling from a tree.

Mal's eyes were fogging up like they always did. He touched them carefully, worked out a piece of grit. He bent his wide lashes back, propping them up with spit. One eye leaked something and it ran gooey down his cheek. He was too old to cry. He fingered the small paper cones of mustard and cream and salted his hand. The table was the best in the house for it offered a view of the street, but the toilet ran on and the wooden doors of the stalls banged in the draft. The menu was glued beneath the glass table-top. Moisture had soaked it with brown. Cuttlefish was unintelligible. As were the fried breads and the list of cola drinks. Actually, Mal couldn't make out any of the words at all. Life is a filthy bill of fare. Death by dyslexia. Still, everything is pretty much the same.

He tried thinking of things as though he could remember them. He could not recollect being born. He had depended upon the aberrant memories of others, upon their eccentric recall. His momma had told him that his little dick was a bright yummy bow like a piece of salt water taffy. His daddy had said nothing before he went away. He had straddled the baby as it crept across the ground as though little Mal were a gulch he had no intention of falling into.

The cowboys ate, wickering through their noses, the roses

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lurching at will on their hairy chests. The coach came in from the racing trials at Milk Creek. He wore a hooded jacket of purple silk and looked like a priest with a whistle hanging around his neck instead of a cross. His day had stopped three years ago although the school still kept him on. He ordered a pint and a meat pie.

"I went crook at them for running back along the bank instead of swimming," he said, "but how was I to know the kid had drowned."

He persisted in teaching the butterfly. His trunks sopped beneath his trousers leaving a stain like a map. He persisted. For the butterfly could not cease to exist simply because one of his charges had died, with his white membranous arms flailing in the current, with his young ribs swelling like hoops in the sunny water... The boy had been doing fine until he drowned. He had been making good time. When retrieved, he looked quite ordinary except for the tips of his fingers.

The coach ate quickly. The pie juices ran down his jowl. Mal, embarrassed, looked away, out into the street again, through the runny lines of NICE. A waitress went by, flicking her tail like a bird. On her lip there was a mole with two long hairs that drooped and crossed prettily upon her teeth when she smiled. But she did not smile at Mal Vester. She went about her work with a vengeful dish rag. She ran it across his folded hands, dug it into the knuckle cracks as though she were scouring a fork. His poor hands reeked and wobbled. They leapt across the table, almost falling off the edge like a pair of gloves.

He pretended he didn't notice.

The cowboys were mopping their plates with cake; the coach tapped his groin uncertainly and wriggled in his chair. From a hole in the wall, plates of food were shoved, the fingers lingering on the sandwiches, snipped off a dangling piece of lettuce with grace and love.

Outside in the rain, a hand waved feebly from the gutter. Mal was uncertain. He rubbed away the NICE. The street was empty. Everything was turning into a yellow dusk and the rain ran down with a tired sound over the small lame hand

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that flopped and sank. He ran out startled through the doors, falling in the mud-room, skidding along on his ear. He picked himself up gently as though he were someone else and ran on to the gutter, his cheekbones stinging, string and ashes hanging from his light eyebrows. The air was yellow. The tops of trees. The plastic protecting the druggist's window candy. The edge of town run off the hill. Did he have a liver ailment? Had he slid by error down a commode? He yelled and stumbled on.

The errant hand flopped like an empty sack. A bird's nest floated by, trim and watertight, softly struck the fingers and was gone. There were no grates on the city's sewer holes. Things fell down there and lived beneath the town—dung black ponies and shit brindle cats. Fish with white bones that shone through the gills. Eventually all were tumbled away, moved by the moon and tidal heaves—horny hoofs and claws and plushy meat out to the sharks banking like birds off the seaweed ledges.

Mal knelt down in the rushing water, grabbing and tugging at the hand soft as pork. The fingers, old-maidish and ringless, skinny and worn down, did not grip him back and he felt sick, all that salt he had licked in the restaurant rising in the back of his throat, his eyes wet and ringing in his head. It was like pulling the glug from a shower-drain. The arm came out stringy and then a little grey head, rising peeved and fierce with lobeless ears. For a moment, he thought it was his dear momma, for she had been lobeless too, all ear itself and open mouth, hearing and saying and kissing him dry. He almost dropped her back in his joy, for one must not dwell on differences. The way to fidelity is through mistaken identity.

But of course it was not his momma, this slippery gloomy wretch that he had hauled onto the street. Quite a crowd had assembled by then to witness the rescue and the old lady lay drying in a muttering circle of hobbled delight, her small feet lopped over the curbstone, her skinned but bloodless knuckles up and rapping at the air.

The next day she was buried, for she had been found dead during the night with peroxide burns around her mouth.

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V

There is no evidence of
trauma about the head. The
central nervous system is
not examined.

For nothing is faithful and nothing stays saved. The watery caul of our birth protects us from nothing and one can die by drowning beyond the sight of a sea.

The black jelly in the roadway was once off and running warm through the trees. And somewhere a place waits for us...

Mal was sixteen and a grateful town sent him to America, for although they all agreed that his intentions were good, there was no denying the traumatic concurrence of his adolescence with death and flood and pregnancy and now all the lambs in the pastures starving and dropping on their way to nurse. The men spat blood in their dinner soup for their daughters paid them no attention and were down at the laundromat, dancing to small radios, picking the lint from their soapy lacy things before the frightened boys, and their women lay immobilized in bed biting at the pillowcases and listening to the rabbits eat the flowers up.

The mayor had a high faint voice and cancer in a nasty place. The town hall was cold and listing, filled with poisoned saucers for the mice, a structure that had been built hurriedly with the threat of constant vows in mind. Mal stood timid and sweating before the extravagant praise, tipping with the pressure of the colored medal as they pressed it to his chest, his eyes opalescent beneath the low thick lids. They appeared that day to be grey in color.

The mayor moved on his rubber donut, his mouth pink and sagging at the corner from the weight of medicine spoons, his bowels bound up, all hope lost, the town's money gone and all his own, spent on shark nets and bubbler screens and keeping the public wards alive. And he was dying all the while. Dying, and his wife was not true, though she was taking in washing to pay for the stone, and each night for him, as he grew thinner, covering less and less space on the brass

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muggy bed, lisping words against the water glass, the sky turned into bright flame like wormwood falling, and now this troublesome licentious boy was out saving suicides.

There was only the mayor and Mal and the council sitting in an even row, their stomachs sick with a heavy breakfast waffle. They placed a plane ticket into Mal's seedy pocket, some folding money... for they did not wish him any harm. Gas blew up between their lips. The health inspector had butter on his sleeve.

The mayor tenderly licked his teeth for they were white and perfect, without cavities and strong as a dog's...

the rescue had taken place and should be suitably rewarded. It was unfortunate that the victim did not recover but beside the point. The old lady had resources that thwarted Mal's brave concern

...though one now seemed loose. He pushed his tongue against it and it lifted neatly out of its socket in the rotting gum and slid down his throat. He grew more pale than before and bolted from the room, his bony hips whirling against the desk, ripping open the drawer where hair ribbons lay tangled with a wet glue pot and discs of plaster painted like coins.

...And what is it that you protect and swaddle in your fashion? Your darling, your favorite, that part of you which you most fear for in the night?? Spine testes head breast lung eyeball?????? There's something for everyone. Some cyst or rupture, tumor or bacillus spore, fracture or fever for us all.

...And the place that you will last recall? Abandoned fridge? Train toilet? Electrocuted pony?

For death is everywhere and the zoo-keeper waits in his soul for the mauling, the coon dog for the master's meat, the maid for the bloody sheet...

Mal went meekly up the ramp with the nerveless calm of perfect fright and into the sky, his passport pinned above the medal to his chest, the photo punched across with green, his poor wet eyes closed but shining behind the lids like a kerchief Christ, and the plane lifted, leaving behind him all his dead, his momma in the foamy trickle, the black dog grinning on the slanting lawn, the rabbits drifting over his daddy's hollow...

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VI

> The attack occurred in a small
> bay with a small watercourse at
> its head. The victim was put in-
> to an ambulance but because of the
> steep grade leading up from the
> water's edge and the slippery sur-
> face the ambulance clutch burnt
> out. There were several dogs taken
> in the area last week.

He wore a tan suit, too tight at the armpits. The button at his neck was split in two and kept sliding through the eyelet, exposing his white throat. He refused dinner and a magazine. He felt as though he were dying. His ears were dully popping. There was a taste of garbage at the very root of his tongue. The clouds gaped and he could see the sea wallowing black and mean, the colors changing to yellow and green over reefs and island shoals. A stewardess swished by, smiling, he knew, like a lunatic. He crouched in his smelly seat. He lifted his heels off the floor. Would they band him like a bird? Tattoo his lip with a number as they did the polar bear? It wasn't a question of affection or protection. They would just want to know how far he had gone by the time he died. She stopped and dropped her hands down to his hips. He looked at her beseechingly and attempted to withdraw himself into his spine. His lap seemed as vulnerable as a child's winter mitten... untidy soiled serge...as the fingers advanced, long and blue near the nails, four like a fork, with a thumb the spoon, her mouth full of Sen-Sen swinging by his ear, ready to masticate, to subdue him forever. She scowled and fumbled, mistakenly sticking her finger into his navel. It dropped in a good inch like a score in a game. He was full of orifices. Like a pinball machine. They could groove or notch or tag him anywhere. They had ways. They could scoop out his brain, he figured, and no one would ever know, because they were so clever, because they left wounds with no scars.

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She cinched him up and strolled away. The belt was buckled too tightly, Mal knew, having bisected the cheese spread sandwich he had brought aboard in his pocket. His discs were bunched like poker chips. But he knew that he was safe, that his fate was not happening yet, and the blood began to course down again from his eyes to the points of his stiff body.

The plane bucked. A baby across the aisle spit up into a National Geographic. Mal's stomach rolled and rose, larding his ribs with the fat of its wall. On the sea it was raining and blowing. He could imagine the storm down there. He crossed his chest and closed his eyes. He could see the tankers going down tonight; the tuna seiners with the nets sweeping over the dead men's eyes; women on yachts in diaphanous gowns, crying in their cabins, their earrings flying away in the howl, their sharp heels wedging in the decks...

A woman was holding the sick baby. "Do you think we'll crash?" she said to Mal. "Do you think this is the end for all of us? And me with my man in Hawaii?" Her voice rose, humming like a set of wings. The child spit all over her hands. "He's so young he don't smell yet. So I guess we can be thankful for that at least."

Mal didn't answer. He found his charm in looking grave. He had difficulty focusing on the child, whose nose was driping, whose little face was the color of the seat. His hands were swelling. His eyes were silting up. When the woman realized that he wasn't going to answer, she shifted her eyes up and to the left, to pretend that she had never been addressing him at all, and wiped her hand's on the baby's shirt.

"And me," she said, "only twenty and my sugar a soldier and far away."

The plane was being swatted around as though it were in the web of some enormous paw. A slice of jelly roll slid off a tray and flopped along the aisle, picking up in its cakey wet a bobby pin. Dust balls from the runner. Cigar ash. The stewardess had disappeared and the passengers began a slow liturgical wail. The lights blinked on and off, and the baby held his breath, the bridge of his nose turning blue.

The young woman pinched the child's cheeks. "I wish you

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was older so you could chew gum. That'd make you feel a whole lot better." She was a mother and serene, wearing a dress with a sweet round collar spotted with drool, her head full of bone and small thoughts breaking softly. She was not really alarmed about the storm, though her mouth was dry, one incisor snagging upon her lip. Sooner or later, Mal knew, the child would be left somewhere, in a movie theater or behind the matches and soap, abandoned without malice or intent, vaguely remaindered like potatoes on a plate. But he would survive, he would manage, because this was a smart-looking baby, thin and desperate. Temples beating on grimly. Long ears throbbing like antennae. Her man was in Hawaii in flowered bikini trunks, with the beach in his sheets, with her grey from poor nutrition too much rice and peanut butter Mal knew having never eaten properly himself, her skin grey and slick and cool as a trout, and the child would just crawl off someplace, into some orange moon of light and be taken in by natives, growing up to dynamite fish. For sharks, he'd learn to chum first, to bring them in, and then to lob grenades into their mouths. He would learn like Mal must, to rectify, and the meat would run like milk. But with a woman he'd be fine. He'd rinse off his hands in clear tap water.

Mal poked at his eye with a grievous thumb, then set to work weeding his eyelashes with his knuckles. Loosening, they made the very slightest pop a rough thicket with a pure white root. Through the plane's tiny window, past the oily prints of former heads, the discarded complexions of weary passengers, there was nothing but an echoing pallor. White and foaming. Mistaken for a glass of someone else's seltzer water, Mal was being downed. Had he been born with a caul they had to cut? He could not remember. But what would protect him from the air? His mother was ripping along on the tides beneath him, far below the surface where there is no wind or breakage. His mother was trying to keep up, he knew, but the Captain had a lisp, and his medal had unloosened and was stabbing at his heart.

In the hold, the pet dogs had given up howling and yapping at the engines. They had always lived unrealistically. Indig-

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nant with trust. They curled up tight with their noses deep beneath their tails.

But the storm had a range, an appointed round, a latitude and longitude responsible to charts, and the plane passed through. The day bobbed up—an invalid's morning, with the light like that after fever and chill, sharp and astonishing, white as a winding sheet. Everyone wiped up and retreated into bad habits. With the soul sinking back to a place between the armpit and the rib. No need to die when you've done it all up to it. A woman mouthed dreamily the hairs of her arm. The smell of death, that odor of sick animals, sweet like a nut and sulphurous, was taken up by comfy flatulence in rubber and wool. Everything proper. Steeping like tea.

Mal ate his cheese sandwich. The bread was wet from his frightened hip. It had beaded up and the mess tasted warm and hybrid. With one determined wince it was gone and they were over Fiji with the music on and the woman with the baby, eying someone else, kissing him the French way in her silly head's eye.

His heart ached as though she had bitten it with her small bright teeth. Mal the father, fatherless, rubbed his chest and squinted at the man she favored—a gentleman with a part taken out of his chin and a cast to his hairline, scowling and untouched by her gaze, the suede patches on his elbows all slick from a puzzling use. She had always wanted someone with a fetish or a profession, not a boy like Mal who loved without method or distinction, who, in a country where everyone had to be spoken and accounted for in some manner, was neither a cowboy or a surfer or a hunter and no one's apprentice either, who had been banished from Australia, a land which refused almost nothing at all, rejected from Australia where even the poisoned rabbits are left lying on the land.

He certainly looked like a professional man. A man with a hobby or a cure for something. He had shiny eyes. Sun-cracked lips. An enormous blue and red tiepin upon which was engraved

MONZA AUTODROMO

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Mal began to hiccough nervously, orange cheese smell scrabbling at the back of his throat. He gulped and tried to hold his breath but air dribbled out between symmetrical gaps between two hind teeth where his smile—when he smiled which was seldom—stopped. He gripped the sides of the seat, burping softly, the cheese rising stultifyingly in his nose bubbly like a bog. The professional man arose and lumbered to a rear compartment, tipping toward Mal as he hurried along, his right knee dipping just before he crashed against his shoulder, braiding Mal's torso like a rope while the part of him below the seat belt remained primly secure. The strange tiepin rapped sullenly against his eye, glowing like the eye of God. Mal lifted up his hand and snagged one finger in the wide buttonholes of the man's tweeds, tearing the nail below the quick. Wordless, the man bored on, while the girl applied fresh lipstick and the baby spit up once more and again into another magazine as though this was its life's sole occupation. Mal sucked his hand and the tears rose like an animal's, awash and gleaming in the sockets, unfallen.

He was frightened by the way people treated him. As though he were a table or a chair or a rock in the street, but worse than that, because at least those things they would use or avoid. Treating him instead as though they couldn't see him. As though he had already moved on and they were performing over the space he had vacated. And he was going to America where mice were found in bottled Coca-Cola straight from the machine. Where girls were scalped by wheels and engines that stacked celery threshed wheat picked cherries hulled pecans. Where there were circuses and rodeos and games of skill, and people knowing things he would never even think about.

Would he ever be able to escape? The dead boys ran away to sea misunderstanding everything, for all they had wanted was the returning. Would he ever find a cute jelly to love him, to see him for what he was? Would he ever get the cure and set his momma's heart to rest?

He ordered a whiskey. It came in a tiny bottle with a tiny glass and napkin like a child's tea set. There was a little paper

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dish with six peanuts in it. He ordered three more whiskeys and between swallows, sucked on his hand, trying to settle the nail back in place with his tongue.

...his sweet momma who had danced with him, guiding him through the rooms of the settling house, into musty closets where moths drifted into his ears, dancing and rocking around and around, his nodding head clunking against her knobby pelvic bone. Riding on her wide fly-pocked feet when he tired. Around and around to the sounds of warped records. Huge birds resting one-legged on the lawn. Smell of low tide. Child bouncing a rubber ball against the privy wall.

His poor momma eaten alive as she worked the sand out of her suit. Who only the day before had trimmed his nails and swabbed his eyes. They were always hemorrhaging mildly from his digging at them. They itched and burned. Along with his teeth and something deep within his ears that he could not get at.

His sweet momma, her sharp bones bruising him every time she drew near, mending him every day, combing his thick hair with her fingers, combing and sweeping and patting it back until Mal thought he was dying, he felt so fine.

He ordered two more whiskeys and brought his hands in close to his chest as the man with the elbow patches shambled back up the aisle and didn't even hesitate before he lowered himself into the empty seat beside the girl. He smiled at her and his teeth were all gold. The tiepin rose and bound as he settled, a part of him that was not so much accessory as guide. Like those plastic balls that divers attach to their weight belts so that they will know in that black unworld in which direction the surface is.

Mal fell asleep while looking as the man turned his broad tweed back and hid the girl and baby from view.

VII

Injuries may be received from
camels either through the bites
from side kicks even when sit-

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ting down or from the animal
knocking a person over and fall-
ing upon him with the breast pad

He awoke in Los Angeles with the plane resting on its huge wheels. He was the only one on board. On the seat across the aisle was a powder puff and a rattle toy. Mal mopped up a bit of drool with his cuff, hoping he had not been sleeping with his mouth open. He was not able to disengage the buckle on his seat belt. It would have been useless to call the stewardess for the key. She was nowhere in sight and there wasn't any place on the belt where a key would go. He writhed and writhed, the buttons on his shirt tearing away with the strain. The collar came askew. He could see rust marks from the wire hanger. He could see the slick of corn meal still embedded in the fabric where someone at the Church Relief Fund had taken the iron scorch from the sleeve.

At last he slid out beneath the belt. He dropped the two unopened bottles into his pocket and buttoned his suit coat up to the neck to conceal the torn shirt. He walked out the door and into a black canvas tube which instead of sloping downward, remained level, throwing Mal off balance, causing him to bump against the soft walls. They were damp from the hot foggy night. It was as though he had collided with one of the sweating wrestlers he had watched so often in the free Sydney gyms. Loose soaking flesh with the scaffolding of bone beneath. Eyes blinded by the smother of hairless stomachs. Everything dark as concussion. Smooth as an egg.

Mal stayed in the terminal for days, for he had no other idea of what to do. It was vast and white and teeming and timeless. He had to walk for twenty minutes just in order to find a glass that was really a window to the outside, to the day or the night and the greasy sky and the planes rising drearily and incessantly with steam and clamor.

The toilets and movies were free. He saw "The War Lover" fourteen times. The aisles were terribly littered and Mal smashed a tonic bottle with his boot. No one turned about. They were all sleeping, grey in the backwash of the

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screen. Mal wished he had a leather flight jacket like the hero. If he had a jacket like that, lined with a sheep, fitting tight and casual, he'd be able to go anywhere.

He spent a day and a half in the theatre. When he re-entered the main terminal, he felt as though he had stepped into a refrigerator. Everything white and whirring and ticking with great florescent lights. It was colder than he ever remembered it being in Australia, and he pulled his suit coat tighter across his shattered shirt.

A boy Mal's age stood outside a luncheonette, holding out a tray of samples. Sections of wieners dipped in a yellow sauce. Pierced by toothpicks with cellophane bows. Mal sidled up and took one, jabbing his lip, in his haste, with the toothpick. He extended a grimy arm to accept another but the boy turned with the tray.

"Don't pull that stuff on me," he hissed. "I'll call the cops."

Mal turned quickly away, aiming for an orange sling chair against the opposite wall, but the boy pursued him, saying "lunk lunk lunk," as though he were choking, as though he were speaking through his lung. Mal slid into the chair, and the boy stood a few paces off, spitting by error onto the wieners.

"Lunk lunk lunk lunk lunk," he said. "Dope." He stamped angrily back to his post, the yellow sauce staining his fingers, his hairline high and ragged.

Mal stayed in one section of the terminal, in one acre, bounded on the north jog by a florist, on the south by a penny arcade, a steel pony at the entrance, the paint peeled from one eye, a quarter stuck in the box mounted on its mane. He sat quietly for the most part, his knees pressed together like a girl's, eating pressed meat on a stiff and oily bun. Along the walls there were cages of drugged cats. Tags ringing against the mesh. Like boom rings clinking against masts. Odor of piss and wood chips. Ladies took their pills at drinking fountains. Hardening lumps of Chiclets mounted all around.

He was beginning to get moles on his face. He tried to tidy himself up in the washroom, but the liquid soap, mounted in a glass bubble, screwed to the wall, irritated his skin, making

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his hands smell as though they had been packed in a paper trunk for the last decade. He had heard a great deal about moles. He didn't want to violate them in any way. He changed his clothes in the washroom, putting on a worn pair of khakis and a green tee shirt. He folded the suit and put it carefully in his suitcase, over the coroner's unreadable statement, between his momma's hairbrushes and the only thing he had ever found in his life, a fillet knife, discovered on the beach between burnt bricks. Thin bones lying everywhere. Jaw of small fierce teeth pointing out to sea.

He sat in the plastic sling chair, touching his eyes and the slick moles, trying to think.

On the sixth day, the boy with the tray of samples came over to Mal. He was carrying brownies, each piece no bigger than a thumbnail. "I'm gonna call the man on you," the boy snarled. "I've taken all I'm gonna take from you. You look so weird sittin' there and I've taken all that I'm ever gonna take from you."

He walked away, the brownies popping all over his tray and a few minutes later returned with a man in a grey uniform and a sweatband grid around his head where his cap had been. It looked as though a very tiny truck had been motoring around his skull. He looked slightly to the left of Mal and high, higher than Mal's head would be even if he were standing.

"Awright," he bawled. "Awright, whatarya trying to do, live your life in this place? Huh? Whatarya practicing here anyway?"

Mal looked wildly about and began to pant. Beneath his light shirt his shoulder blades felt like a wooden coat hanger had been sewn cleverly beneath the skin. He felt the bulk of all his bones keeping him down, weighing him to the chair and he hunched forward and panted harder.

"Since you don't seem to be doing anything at the present," the man said, "whyn't you come with me and you can mow the lawn around the county jail."

Mal shook his head. His sternum was heaving around beneath his tee shirt. He imagined it leaping through the cloth

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and scaring them all to death.

"Oh, then you must be waiting on somebody, huh," the man said.

"He ain't waiting on nobody. You'd best believe that. He's just weird is all. Sitting here for a week. Taking advantage. Like to drive me nuts." The boy, pale with indignation, had been clawing at the brownies. The tray was covered only with crumbs. The crumbs were blowing around and settling on everything.

"You waiting on somebody, boy?" the man asked Mal.

A girl walked out of the penny arcade. She wore a short faded dress and her hair was in a long yellow braid that hung down past her waist. The braid was tied with yarn and the loopy bow of it swayed below the hem of her dress. She wore dark glasses and yellow tennis shoes and carried a card. She walked over and stood between the man and Mal and said, "We're together and we're leaving. This here is my escort to Texas."

She patted Mal on the shoulder. She smelled clean and leafy as though she'd been swimming in a lake, and Mal got up and followed her away just as though he'd been free all the time to do just that.

VIII

Walt Faulkner, sole survivor of the
factory Lincoln team, was driving like
a madman. Coming into Mexico City,
peasants lined both sides of the road 50
deep, touching the cars with their fin-
gers as they thundered past. Faulkner
never slowed his charge. He boomed thru
the tunnel of humanity flat out. Later,
when someone asked what he would have done
had he plowed into the mob, he replied,
"Turn on the windshield wipers."

It was a large white car. A very sensual car. Hot remote white

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and air-cooled, chilling his knees. An orange butterfly smashed delicately on the left headlight. Mal felt loving. His thick hair fell past his eyes, socked in the hollows of his cheeks. A balloon torso of a man tilted slightly toward the tinted glass on the passenger side. A plasticine mask on the bullet shaped head a real cloth coat and a clip-on tie. Wearing a cream ten-gallon hat. The girl turned a rubber petcock where the lap should have begun, flattened him out, folded him up and put him in her saddlebag handbag.

At a Texaco station they soaped off the butterfly and pumped 26 gallons into the machine while the girl talked incessantly and fed Mal Eskimo Pies and fried chicken and honey from a cardboard box. The cold of the ice-cream sang in his teeth. The honey dripped down through his fingers and onto the cards that she showed him. One card was made of thick cardboard and on one side it said

A STRANGER IS THE WAY

and on the other side there was a drawing of a horseshoe and the words

KEEP ME SOMEWHERE IN YOUR HOME
AND YOUR LOVE WILL NEVER ROAM

"That's what slid out of the fortune-telling machine in the arcade," the girl said. "Same time I saw you sitting there this nickel card fell into my hand. The gypsy doll there in the corner between the hockey game and the bear shoot? You know?"

She gave him the other card. It said

DRIVERS WANTED
ANYWHERE
ALL GAS PAID 502–3061118

"This is how I get along. Drive anything though mostly tony cars. Cadillacs. Buicks. Lincolns. Because the people that like this service are rich and fly home and mostly old and feeble. I strip everything that's not needed for the thing to move forward, move back and stop. Air conditioners. Stereo tapes. I swap the batteries and the tires and the jacks with junks in yards 10 or 20 miles from my drop-off point. And no one notices. I wash it up properly before I arrive. Sweep it out.

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Everyone's happy as pie. Because they don't know a thing about cars. As long as it gets them to the druggist for their Preparation H. As long as it gets them to the grave site. They've all got brains wrapped in prophylactics. They don't allow *nothing* inside their heads. So this is how I manage. No way to make a killing but I see a lot of the country and I love to drive. Nothing I'd rather do than drive a big rocking ark like this for free. Driving a fast cool car going for places I don't know... You got a lot of moles honey. That's supposed to mean something, I read, though I can't recall what. Something about something."

Mal nodded, his cheek full of fowl wing.

"You know how to drive? No? Well, I'll teach you."

But she never did. She did all the driving, fast and smooth and aggressive, heavy on the horn and gas, her round elbow burning in the southwestern sun, her legs set wide apart on the floorboards, hoop earrings shaking and shining, long yellow braid hanging pure as a rope from a church belfry.

She never stopped talking. It was delicious. No one had talked to him like this since his momma with her fathomless loving prattle; her words after a few years no longer performing the function of speaking to him any more but of breathing for him. Providing his head with oxygen like an iron lung. Keeping him going. Tending him fit. The lids coming down and the nostrils pinching shut. The lips moving around the fingers she thrust at him to kiss.

"Them really your eyes, honey? You didn't get them out of one of those banks? Don't seem to lie in your head right."

Oh she was tough and constant, blonde lean and shiny. He touched her hair and it was soft and so yellow that he thought the color of it would come off on his fingers just as though he'd been rubbing up against a flower. She fed him for a thousand miles. He kept eating and felt weaker and weaker. Shrimp and candy bars. Peaches and grapes and whole pecan pies. Lasagne in a bucket. Loaves of salty rye. Washing it all down with vodka and orange crush as they drove. The huge car bucking and snaking through the traffic of the towns and then out onto the plains, the single note of birds leaping in his ears,

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traveling so fast that the bird was two miles back by the time it had finished its trill.

Oh she was hard and honest with the black glasses wrapped around her eyes even in the moonless night, handling the car as though it were an extension of herself. As though it were a steel claw attached to the wrist of a gone hand. Going through toll stations, she would pay for the strangers in the car behind, jetting off in their bafflement, leaving a coil of bluish smoke.

"It confuses them," she said. "It puts them in arrears."

Mal squeezed her arm tentatively. There was a hard hot determined little muscle there. She took two swallows of vodka for every one of crush from a bottle of chocolaty red. She had never even asked his name. He decided that if she did, he would say it was Monza. He wedged his head beneath her armpit.

"I never did much of that," she said and began kissing his neck, sucking up the skin beneath her teeth as though she were chewing on an artichoke, leaving round blue blossoms ringing his collarbone. She smelled so clean and distant—like something laundered in a brook and dried in the summer sun. He smelled like a wolf's pissing tree, he knew. His navel itched and reeked. His pretty hair was wadded to his head. But the girl kept feeding him and tweaking his side. Tacos and fritters. Chili dogs and sugar crullers. Shards of potato chips quivered in his stinging gums. His mouth was stained blue with berry tarts. In Lubbock, she bought a case of bourbon and a box of fortune cookies. Mal cracked his open, eager but exhausted. The moisture from the air-conditioner dripped and beaded on the hot asphalt. There had been carelessness at the factory. A typographical error in the confection seductively creased and joined. The lines of print were overlaid, the future foundered. She shook her head and looked distressed, a bit illicit and naïve in her short thin dress and canvas shoes. She turned the car out of the grocery store's lot, away from the sun-blackened bag boy, and onto the roadway towards salt water.

She settled him into a beach house while she delivered the car. Bones of cows holding up the window sashes. Cold sand clogged in corners. Insects by the rag-wrapped pipes. Rust on

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the undersides of everything. Mal had bathed by the time she returned by taxi, squatting in the truncated tub, scrubbing with a pillowcase. The water was sulphurous and had steadily turned a dark green as he soaped. Not unattractive. Not without its charm. Green like his eyes might have been when they were well. Clinging tenaciously without substance to the porcelain sides. Nothing he could put his finger on.

The sea air lapped his head. He felt on holiday. As though it were Boxing Day at home. He was Monza Dong from Wollongong. The sea birds flew by in a tight clutch and she said, "It flies to Chile and then to Greenland, that bird. Them sanderlings. And they aren't but a few inches long and tall."

She strung some twine from the shack to a sea grape and washed out their clothes and hung them out to dry. She curled up on the mildewed sheets all pale and frail and accessible except for the black glasses wrapped around her eyes, and with her hair yellow and warm as a buttered biscuit. In the night, Mal woke dizzy to the thick braid sliding from his cheek and the call of the whippoorwill and he saw her opening the refrigerator door, the light muffled somewhere from a bulb behind the hastily stocked shelves, exposing her as she pushed her throat back to drink milk from a carton, showing just to him her small breasts and curving ribs shining in the hum. Shining like wheat in a frost... and her chest was cool when she returned, her lips cold and sour. When she touched him, it was as though she were trying to get at something else, something in the damp mattress ticking, something in the punctured foam, as though she'd push her hand right through him to get it, cupping her hand through his chest and drawing out what she preferred. Mal rolled his eyes shut. He slept fitfully. Things rode across the shiny sand. The girl's dress rose and seized in the noiseless wind.

IX

It is stated that a lad in Victoria,
many years ago, climbed into the en-
trance of an occupied wombat's burrow.

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> The disturbed animal started to come out and in passing the young man, feeling pressure on its back, immediately raised its back to support the supposed fall of its roof and pressed its victim against the roof, killing him.

She cut off her braid and astonished him by not looking any different than she had before. Sawing it off with a blunt bread knife, tying it around his collapsed and peeling waist, going back to her bourbon in the flowered coffee cup.

"If I cut it off at just the right length," she said, "it'll grow right back in six or so months. Like a crab making up its biggest claw." She was great on hair and fingernails she told him. Like something in the grave.

Mal was shy. With not too much effort, he could see a withered face within it. Caulked nostrils. Little glass eyes. He hung it in the shade, poured sand in the last of the whiskey bottles and looked back at the shore where he had been watching a school of fish rising white and predisposed through a wave. The girl went back to sleeping on the beach, slung in a small depression, her cleavered hair curling around her ear lobes, her stomach pulsing like her heart, her square toenails pointing out to the fog coming off the water.

She'd later wrap the braid around him and they'd walk along the heat-heaved road, holding hands and sweating in the dark. The hair chaffed him though she washed it in shampoo and braided it fresh each day. It was gold. The tub was now a decided green. Very modern looking. His own hair was the color of walnuts and hid the painful knobs of his spine. He was frightened that it would set to smolder in the sun. At night it would seem to steam.

The road had been made cheaply with large quantities of sand and it was pocky and dangerous. Cars bottomed out. In the rains some floated and some didn't. Everything in the area was made with sand. Houses and bridges and benches. The statue of a cow in town. Toys were filled with it. They cheated and beat at you with sand, the girl said. They treated and

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tempered the things you used. The sand was disappearing from the beach. All that was left were gravelly pockets and people writing ORAMIT in the smooth tidal wash, which she had seen, in letters so big they could only be for an airplane or a chopper or the Chile flying bird. She was waiting for them to make a car from sand that ran on salt water, she said, and she'd be happy as a princess then, she'd be smug and set forever. They had already made cars with frames of wood, of glass. In a wreck it would slide up under your skin like a sliver, punching into your heart as though you were a fiend. In a smash it would slice you up like a 2000 pound beer bottle. Caroming icicles. All crackling like snow on the heat of the overhead cams.

In a sand car, she said, they'd go to Florida and eat coconut ice cream. They'd see a reptile show. They'd have to carry straws to be prepared, to push up through the weight if it collapsed, to use for breathing until the rescue party dug them out, in the meantime, however, using them to draw on the frozen daiquiris that she would pack in the thermos. Mal giggled slowly and adjusted the hair cocoon. He stopped and kissed her. Her tongue rooted out his chewing gum.

At noon, she would often run ice cubes across his wrists. She noted that he had no lines on the palms of his hands.

One morning as they were playing boule on the beach, they saw several trucks and cranes traveling up the road. They parked in the ditch not far away. The men swung down from the cabs and walked back toward the town. Mal and the girl tried to ignore them but they were huge and brightly painted. No one ever attended them or moved them any further up the road. They just canted in the sand and shone in the sun, the chrome so clear that cardinals hopped over them all day long, admiring their own scarlet, dashing selves.

Mal went back to playing the pretty game. The sight of the balls as they arched heavily through the air and the sound of them as they struck one another was very pleasant to him. The sun was a sockeye salmon weaving in the mist. The clouds were foaming gin. Sometimes Mal would fall asleep while standing.

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The girl left in the morning for limes. The tide was out, a bar exposed. He could still see the moon in the sky. He thought the shark was a rubber tire until he had reached its snout. Someone had carved out the jaws. It was deflated, the stomach covered its side, all black and orange like a bad squash. He sat down to watch it and discovered that he couldn't think about it any more. He walked down the beach to see what else he could find. When he turned back, he could see dimly that the house had been leveled. The machines were further down the road and all that remained was a stack of boards and insects fleeing across the sand, and the boule balls in a ragged nest.

Mal ran around in a tight little circle like a dog trying to bite himself. He didn't know if he would see the braid waving from the aerial, whipping like a squirrel's tail on the right, on the side of her protective jockey which was blown up by her own damp and narrow and nervous lips. He didn't know what, in that which he saw passing on the road, he should regard as his own.

No one was immune. The wilderness snapped and glided like a varmint. He could hear it at dusk, whirring and wheeling, hooting in his ear. The oceanic desert. The jungled marsh. Didn't she know? There were rabid foxes and loose tie rods. Current rattled up through the bidet. Sails luffed. Brain pans bent and burnt.

Mal started to run. Snapping from car aerials were flags and flowers and underwear. Inside the people were smiling and shifting around and drinking from paper cups. And over it all was the smell of rubber and oil and salt in the light and the bright sunshine. The beach was endless and Mal ran and ran.

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Gerard Malanga

Rainy Days

What is this inexhaustible desire?
Compelled towards an end whose nature only
The lonely find inevitable. This moment is
For those able to disperse from our
Grief which is trivia and up to the ages.

from "Ivy Films" by Albert René Ricard

I turn on the gas
heater to keep warm.
A long letter to Allen Midgette
who is living
in New York at the moment.
No word from Andy
or Paul. It's Sunday
the day after the Anniversary of
the Victory of the War 1915–18.
Francesca home in bed with a head
cold. Peter is in
the bedroom asleep.
Outside it's raining
incessantly. I feel bereft
of imagination and change
and know from the start
René knows the pain of being
ugly when someone is turning him
down. Has something gone wrong
in the twentieth century
we have no control over?
René means no harm.

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"It is the curiosity of the youthful"
it was all he could tell me,
cruising the streets of New York City in vain for a flower
to steal or the pretty face of a boy
he looks forward to see in the morning
beside him in bed.

Rome, 5:xi:67

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Ode to Albert René Ricard and the Waking Day

I speak of one whose triumph
is like his own despair
"a prison we all carry";
his spirit eager for love
which is his only recognition.
His dreams are his own
as are the phrases of a one-night stand
or what might have been
his perfect innocence
or the clouds withholding
the light that would prevent
flowers from growing.
He's like a sunset of pure sensibility.
His "good looks" are an obstacle.
Yet he is so smooth,
feeling corrupt, at times,
trying desperately to count
the friends as they die
near the spot where
something good is about to happen.
I would like to avoid speaking
of time as an ocean
and step across it without feeling
nostalgic for something familiar,
which is always intruding on friendship.
The conception of love
barely suggests the complications,
or thoughts of him climbing a fire
escape or repacking a suitcase.
His life devoted to making himself free

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from the rumors of love
drifting into everyone's ears.
But thoughts of sentiment intrude
like a major irritation without passing.
I am assuming that he's safe
where legal contracts are not
in favor of one's time, at the expense of
the only thing he wants in the world
made to happen.

Rome, Sunday 29:x:67

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Bruce F. Kawin

Five Weeks of Poems to Marilyn

His Irish accent
He jumps you in the subway
I love you

We are influenced by French movies
by Swedish movies English movies—
Shall I strap you to the bed?
After *Dear John* through rain and apartment to bed
The ship, the clean present
Resnais destroyed my mind
And when will we go to New York?
the gallery's closing
and my mysterious contacts—

I am almost relieved, in the subway—
his clean air
as he pulls you out of the car
I will kill him for it
But let us pause to admire

on the days I receive you at once
I remember so well
He is the lover in poems

Between 59th and 72nd
the gum lost its flavor
at 86th
the ads got off
at 96th
everyone reading The Daily News
got off, and everyone reading The Enquirer
at 110th.

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At 116th
we were home. Some evening ride
to 207th might not be in bad taste.

I look at you more than 24 times a second

Camp out with me: we're preadolescent.
I promise we'll live on a farm
Tell me your images:

> "Together till soon
> The time of irony
> Death baking bread
> In our trailer—"

No, of us; you've held them so long.

> "Oh write me quickly,
> abandoned in this building.
> Our own time only
> draws together so."

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J. P. Webster

Some Talk Of Us

If the generation wither
twinkling slinky, our of which
how should I
your feathers be smoothed?

Belaboring pinions wrench both shoulders
if the generation wither
and the wink in osprey's eye
clicks not cheer
so near that cracking beak ALL RIGHT!
all right? yes, all
but it is very tall.
Farther toward then, because of if,
indigo children? yes
though sapphire and seawater do not
if the generation wither
mix say only:

1. we were ever seldom
2. we had tusks and bathed in rosy bassinets
3. we had glass maternal love
4. our shirts hugged our shoulders for sex
5. we were an eminent essay

all right? all right? all right?

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Then it wasn't for that the birds understood
(the knowing claw and windshield-wiper wink)
it was blue feathers, proud and blue
and skies so blue that Sunday left the week.
This it was
                it was
                        it was
if the generation weather
here in hot
flowering and tendrils and lichen
confusing calmandos of science
    and oh the fish
    were all I could wish
    were
If the generation weather
                dead
then it laugh and sing
        Hollow my bones
        soft and heard
        and many answers bring
          ALL RIGHT!?
All
all alright, and you
Your feathers be smoothed in
I the sky.

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John Koethe

Copley Square

Up-and-down shafts of light brick
Lift occupants up into prisms or roofs
Of green copper, and then embark on the sky.
12:44 by the Suffolk Franklin Savings Bank's
Clock, 93° outside, inside a cool bed of dimes.
A jet overhead that gets picked up by a pigeon
Gliding by lower down, some more modern banks
And a bank of lanterns set like a row of spears,
A Try Rooti Root Beer truck almost collides
With a spiffy yellow Checker Cab, and flags
Flop in front of the Sheraton Plaza Hotel.
Plenty of seersucker walks by below, or sits
On a deep-heated long granite bench,
Listening to the library,
Half-eating a half-eaten peach,
And bakes in the breeze.

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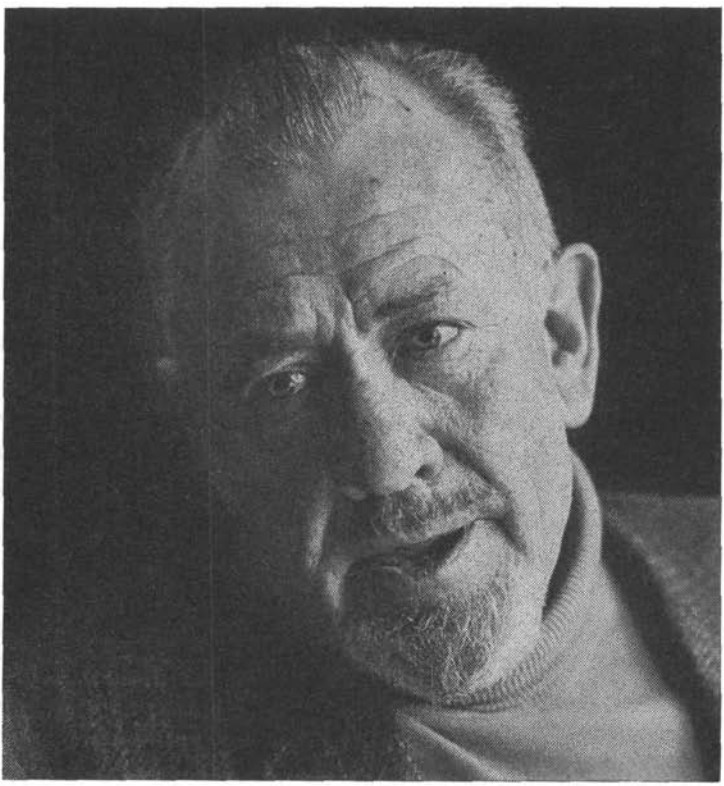
The Art of Fiction XLV

John Steinbeck



EDITOR'S NOTE

John Steinbeck had agreed to a Paris Review interview late in his life. He had earlier been coy about it, but then wanted the interview very much. He was, unfortunately, too sick to work on the project, though it was at the end often in his thoughts.With this interest of his in mind, the editors of this magazine compiled a number of comments on the Art of Fiction that John Steinbeck made over the years. The majority of them come from the *East of Eden* diaries, published in December 1969 by The Viking Press under the title *Journey of a Novel*. The quotes have been organized under various topic headings rather than chronologically, as they are in the diaries. Nathaniel Benchley, a close friend of the author, has provided the introduction.

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By rights this preface or introduction or whatever it is should be called "Compliments of a Friend," because I have neither the perspective nor the desire to offer up a critique of John Steinbeck's writing, even if anyone would listen. Furthermore nobody has asked me to, so we're all that much better off. I knew him, and I know a little bit of what he thought about writing, and that will be my contribution.

He once said that to write well about something you had to either love it or hate it very much, and that in a sense was a mirror of his own personality. Things were either black or white, and although he might change his basic position (as he eventually did about the Vietnam war), if you were on his side you could do no wrong and if you were agin him you could do no right. It wasn't as simplistic as that may make it sound, but there were very few gray areas where he was concerned. And when he wrote, you certainly knew whose side he was on. You hoped it was yours.

Long ago, he was quoted as saying that genius was a little boy chasing a butterfly up a mountain. He later insisted that what he'd really said was that it was a butterfly chasing a little boy up a mountain (or a mountain chasing a butterfly up a little boy; I've forgotten which) and I think in some ways he was haunted by having caught his butterfly so early in the game. He never said this in so many words (to me, at any rate), but his fierce dedication to his writing, and his conviction that every word he put down was the best he could find, were signs of a man who dreaded ever having it said that he was slipping, or that he hadn't given it his best. One time, at the behest of a son of mine at Exeter, he wrote a few paragraphs for the 76th anniversary edition of The Exonian*; he called it "In Awe of Words," and with the permission of the management I'll reproduce it here, because as usual he says these things better for himself.*

> A man who writes a story is forced to put into it the best of his knowledge and the best of his feeling. The discipline of the written word punishes both stupidity and dishonesty. A writer lives in awe of words for they can be cruel or kind, and they can change their meanings right in front of you. They

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pick up flavors and odors like butter in a refrigerator. Of course, there are dishonest writers who go on for a little while, but not for long—not for long.

A writer out of loneliness is trying to communicate like a distant star sending signals. He isn't telling or teaching or ordering. Rather he seeks to establish a relationship of meaning, of feeling, of observing. We are lonesome animals. We spend all life trying to be less lonesome. One of our ancient methods is to tell a story begging the listener to say—and to feel—

"Yes, that's the way it is, or at least that's the way I feel it. You're not as alone as you thought."

Of course a writer rearranges life, shortens time intervals, sharpens events, and devises beginnings, middles and ends. We do have curtains—in a day, morning, noon and night, in a man, birth, growth and death. These are curtain rise and curtain fall, but the story goes on and nothing finishes.

To finish is sadness to a writer—a little death. He puts the last word down and it is done. But it isn't really done. The story goes on and leaves the writer behind, for no story is ever done.

Reading through his obituaries, I found a good deal of analytical writing about his work, and one rewrite man ventured the personal note that he was considered shy, but nowhere did I see a word about one of the most glorious facets of his character, which was his humor. All good humor defies analysis (E. B. White likened it to a frog, which dies under dissection) and John's defied it more than most, because it was not gag-type humor but was the result of his wildly imaginative mind, his remarkable store of knowledge, and his precision with words. This respect for, and precision with, words led him to avoid almost every form of profanity; where most people would let their rage spill out the threadbare obscenities, he would concoct some diatribe that let off the steam and was at the same time mildly diverting. One example should suffice: At Easter about three years ago we were visiting the Steinbecks at Sag Harbor, and John and I arose before the ladies to make

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breakfast. He hummed and puttered about the kitchen with the air of a man who was inventing a new form of toaster, and suddenly the coffee pot boiled over, sending torrents of coffee grounds over the stove and clouds of vapor into the air. John leaped for the switch, shouting, "Nuts! *No wonder I'm a failure! No wonder nobody ever asks for my hand in marriage!* Nuts!" *By that time both he and the coffee had simmered down, and he started a new pot. I think that this was the day he stoutly denied having a hangover, and after a moment of reflection added,* "*Of course, I do have a headache that starts at the base of my spine...*" *He spent the rest of the morning painting an Easter egg black, as a protest.*

There was, oddly, a lot of little boy left in him, if by little boy you can mean a searching interest in anything new, a desire to do or to find or to invent some sort of diversion, a fascination with any gadget of any sort whatsoever, and the ability to be entertained by comparative trivia. He was the only adult I have ever seen who would regularly laugh at the Sunday comics; he raised absolute hell in our kitchen with an idea for making papier-mâché in the Waring blender with a combination of newspaper and water and flour; and he would conduct frequent trips to the neighborhood toy store, sometimes just to browse through the stock and sometimes to buy an item like a cap pistol as a Valentine's Day present for his wife. To be with him was to be on a constant parranda, *either actual or intellectual, and the only person bewildered by it was his children's nurse, who once said,* "*I don't see why Mr. Steinbeck and Mr. Benchley go out to those bars, when there's all that free liquor at home.*"

And late at night, over some of the "*free*" *liquor at home, he would sometimes read Synge's translations of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura, and then he would weep. It wasn't the liquor; it was the lilt of Synge's words and the ache in Petrarch's heart, and there was one of the sonnets that I never once heard him read through to the end.*

—NATHANIEL BENCHLEY

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ON LUCK

You know on my left hand on the pad just below the little finger, I have a dark brown spot. And on my left foot in a corresponding place I have another one almost the same. One time a Chinese, seeing the spot on my hand, became very much excited and when I told him about the one on my foot he was keenly interested. He said that in Chinese palmistry the hand spot was a sign of the greatest possible good luck and the one on my foot doubled it. These spots are nothing but a dark pigmentation. I've had them from birth. Indeed, they are what is known as birthmarks. But the reason I brought it up is this. For the last year and a half, they have been getting darker. And if I am to believe in my spots, this must mean that the luck is getting better. And sure enough I have Elaine [Mrs. John Steinbeck] and what better luck could there be. But the spots continue to darken and maybe that means that I am going to have a book, too. And that would be great good luck, too.

ON WORK HABITS

Mark Twain used to write in bed—so did our greatest poet.* But I wonder how often they wrote in bed—or whether they did it twice and the story took hold. Such things happen. Also I would like to know what things they wrote in bed and what things they wrote sitting up. All of this has to do with comfort in writing and what its value is. I should think that a comfortable body would let the mind go freely to its gathering.

You know I always smoke a pipe when I work—at least I used to and now I have taken it up again. It is strange—as soon as a pipe begins to taste good, cigarettes become tasteless. I find I smoke fewer and fewer cigarettes. Maybe I can cut them out entirely for a while. This would be a very good thing. Even with this little change, my deep-seated and peren-

* Mr. Benchley believes this is probably Stevenson.

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nial cigarette cough is going away. A few months without that would be a real relief.

The pipes are tasting very good. I have a feeling to buy a meerschaum and start coloring it as I do this book. Maybe I will do that. By the time the pipe is brown the book should be done. More magics. I think tomorrow I will look for a meerschaum, a small light one. Saw one in a window the other day but I forget where.

I have dawdled away a good part of my free time now carving vaguely on a scrap of mahogany, but I guess I have been thinking too. Who knows. I sit here in a kind of a stupor and call it thought.

Now I have taken the black off my desk again, clear down to the wood, and have put a green blotter down. I am never satisfied with my writing surface.

My choice of pencils lies between the black Calculator stolen from Fox Films and this Mongol 2⅜ F which is quite black and holds its point well—much better in fact than the Fox pencils. I will get six more or maybe four more dozen of them for my pencil tray.

I have found a new kind of pencil—the best I have ever had. Of course it costs three times as much too but it is black and soft but doesn't break off. I think I will always use these. They are called Blackwings and they really glide over the paper.

You know I am really stupid. For years I have looked for the perfect pencil. I have found very good ones but never the perfect one. And all the time it was not the pencils but me. A pencil that is all right some days is not good another day. For example, yesterday, I used a special pencil soft and fine and it floated over the paper just wonderfully. So this morning I try the same kind. And they crack on me. Points break and all

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hell is let loose. This is the day when I am stabbing the paper. So today I need a harder pencil at least for a while. I am using some that are numbered 2⅜. I have my plastic tray you know and in it three kinds of pencils for hard writing days and soft writing days. Only sometimes it changes in the middle of the day, but at least I am equipped for it. I have also some super soft pencils which I do not use very often because I must feel as delicate as a rose petal to use them. And I am not often that way. But when I do have such moments I am prepared. It is always well to be prepared. Pencils are a great expense to me and I hope you know it. I buy them four dozen at a time. When in my normal writing position the metal of the pencil eraser touches my hand, I retire that pencil. Then Tom and Catbird get them. And they need pencils. They need lots of pencils. Then I have this kind of pencil and it is too soft. Whenever you see a thing like that . the point broke. I have fine prejudices, lazy ones and enjoyable ones. It occurs to me that everyone likes or wants to be an eccentric and this is my eccentricity, my pencil trifling. It isn't a very harmful one. Maybe I have others which are more. The electric pencil sharpener may seem a needless expense and yet I have never had anything that I used more and was more help to me. To sharpen the number of pencils I use every day, I don't know how many but at least sixty, by a hand sharpener would not only take too long but would tire my hand out. I like to sharpen them all at once and then I never have to do it again that day. So, you will say, I have wasted enough time for one day but I have managed to do something else too. I have lost the sense of rush with which I started this and that is exactly what I intended to do.

My pencils are all short now and I think I will celebrate by getting out twelve new pencils. Sometimes the just pure luxury of long beautiful pencils charges me with energy and invention. We shall see. It means I will have to have more pencils before long though. Would you send me another box. They are Mongol 480 #2⅜ F round.

Well, here they are and I just sharpened them and oh! Lord I think my pencil sharpener is burning up. And if it is

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I'll be sick. I would have to have another one or have this repaired. When my work is done I will open it and see what is wrong. And if I can't correct it, you are likely to get a long-distance call and a hurry up. However, I may be able to find what is wrong. It just suddenly began to smoke and throw sparks. And it should not go out like this. I deeply depend on it.

In the very early dawn, I felt a fiendish desire to take my electric pencil sharpener apart. It has not been working very well and besides I have always wanted to look at the inside of it. So I did and found that certain misadjustments had been made at the factory. I corrected them, cleaned the machine, oiled it and now it works perfectly for the first time since I have it. There is one reward for not sleeping.

Today is a dawdly day. They seem to alternate. I do a whole of a day's work and then the next day, flushed with triumph, I dawdle. That's today. The crazy thing is that I get about the same number of words down either way. This morning I am clutching the pencil very tight and this is not a good thing. It means I am not relaxed. And in this book I want to be just as relaxed as possible. Maybe that is another reason I am dawdling. I want that calmness to settle on me that feels so good—almost like a robe of cashmere it feels.

It has been a good day of work with no harm in it. I have sat long over the desk and the pencil has felt good in my hand. Outside the sun is very bright and warm and the buds are swelling to a popping size. I guess it is a good thing I became a writer. Perhaps I am too lazy for anything else.

You know I am really a stupid fool. All of these years I have written in a big book because I love the fine paper with lines. But to get the paper I have to take the covers. And I get my wrist burned and very tired after I pass the middle of the page. The rise of an inch makes a very great difference in tiredness. Now after all of these years, it occurs to me that

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I can just as well take the pages out and write on each sheet separately. Why never before? In this book, which is going to be rebound anyway, I am only now just learning this. It is really stupid of me. However, that's the way it is. I am going to try to write more than my quota today. I can take all day at it so it doesn't matter. I don't think of anything which can interfere with me. Yesterday I ordered a carpenter's workbench for my room. I have always wanted one and never in my life had one. It is a very strange half life I had. I haven't the brains of a mud turtle. And maybe it is a good thing. If I had any brains I would blow them out probably. But I am going to have a little workbench just the same, where I can work with my little tools. I love to do that, I really do. There's a broken chair right now that I really want to get fixed. I had to work out the technique for fixing it because it is the worst broken-up thing you ever saw. Say, I also have to do some rewiring of fixtures in the house. So many things to do.

On the third finger of my right hand I have a great callus just from using a pencil for so many hours every day. It has become a big lump by now and it doesn't ever go away. Sometimes it is very rough and other times, as today, it is as shiny as glass. It is peculiar how touchy one can become about little things. Pencils must be round. A hexagonal pencil cuts my fingers after a long day. You see I hold a pencil for about six hours every day. This may seem strange but it is true. I am really a conditioned animal with a conditioned hand.

I am really dawdling today when what I want to write is in my head. It is said that many writers talk their books out and so do not write them. I think I am guilty of this to a large extent. I really talk too much about my work and to anyone who will listen. If I would limit my talk to inventions and keep my big mouth shut about work, there would probably be a good deal more work done.

The callus on my writing finger is very sore today. I may have to sandpaper it down. It is getting too big.

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And I have a desire not to work today which I must not indulge. I don't know why this ferocious discipline but it seems good to me. I repaired my cut finger with nail polish to protect it from the pencil and it is just drying now. That's why the handwriting is strange. A bandage feels strange but clear nail polish is a fine covering.

The silly truth is that I can take almost any amount of work but I have little tolerance for confusion.

An amazing number of pretty girls are passing by my window. I like pretty girls very much but I am old enough now so that I don't have to associate with them. And that's a relief.

I think if I were forbidden by some force to work, I should last a very short time. And I don't say that morbidly at all. I think perhaps I am one of those lucky mortals whose work and whose life are the same thing. It is rare and fortunate.

ON CRAFT

Books establish their own pace. This I have found out. As soon as the story starts its style will establish itself. But still I do not think that all the experimenting is wasted that has kept some aliveness. The waggling pencil—the apes with typewriters hitting at a dictionary—this has been all right but it cannot be depended on.

It has been said often that a big book is more important and has more authority than a short book. There are exceptions of course but it is very nearly always true. I have tried to find a reasonable explanation for this and at last have come up with my theory, to wit: The human mind, particularly in the present, is troubled and fogged and bee-stung with a thousand little details from taxes to war worry to the price of meat. All these usually get together and result in a man's fighting with his wife because that is the easiest channel of relief for inner

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unrest. Now—we must think of a book as a wedge driven into a man's personal life. A short book would be in and out quickly. And it is possible for such a wedge to open the mind and do its work before it is withdrawn leaving quivering nerves and cut tissue. A long book, on the other hand, drives in very slowly and if only in point of time remains for a while. Instead of cutting and leaving, it allows the mind to rearrange itself to fit around the wedge. Let's carry the analogy a little farther. When the quick wedge is withdrawn, the tendency of the mind is quickly to heal itself exactly as it was before the attack. With the long book perhaps the healing has been warped around the shape of the wedge so that when the wedge is finally withdrawn and the book set down, the mind cannot ever be quite what it was before. This is my theory and it may explain the greater importance of a long book. Living with it longer has given it greater force. If this is true a long book, even not so good, is more effective than an excellent short story.

If a man has a too pat style, his reader can after a little time keep ahead of him. I mean the reader will know what is coming by how it is done. And I am trying to remove this possibility by constant change.

There are many things which must not be said but which must be translated into symbols. Robinson Jeffers once said that he wrote witches and devils outside the house in order to prevent their getting in the house. Maybe everyone does that to a certain extent. But again we must not mistake mouse mutterings for earthquakes. That would be a bad mistake.

The craft or art of writing is the clumsy attempt to find symbols for the wordlessness. In utter loneliness a writer tries to explain the inexplicable. And sometimes if he is very fortunate and if the time is right, a very little of what he is trying to do trickles through—not ever much. And if he is a writer wise enough to know it can't be done, then he is not a writer at all. A good writer always works at the impossible.

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There is another kind who pulls in his horizons, drops his mind as one lowers rifle sights. And giving up the impossible he gives up writing. Whether fortunate or unfortunate, this has not happened to me. The same blind effort, the straining and puffing go on in me. And always I hope that a little trickles through. This urge dies hard.

Writing is a very silly business at best. There is a certain ridiculousness about putting down a picture of life. And to add to the joke—one must withdraw for a time from life in order to set down that picture. And third one must distort one's own way of life in order in some sense to simulate the normal in other lives. Having gone through all this nonsense, what emerges may well be the palest of reflections. Oh! it's a real horse's ass business. The mountain labors and groans and strains and the tiniest of rodents come out. And the greatest foolishness of all lies in the fact that to do it at all, the writer must believe that what he is doing is the most important thing in the world. And he must hold to this illusion even when he knows it is not true. If he does not, the work is not worth even what it might otherwise have been.

All this is a preface to the fear and uncertainties which clamber over a man so that in his silly work he thinks he must be crazy because he is so alone. If what he is doing is worth doing—why don't more people do it? Such questions. But it does seem a desperately futile business and one which must be very humorous to watch. Intelligent people live their lives as nearly on a level as possible—try to be good, don't worry if they aren't, hold to such opinions as are comforting and reassuring and throw out those which are not. And in the fullness of their days they die with none of the tearing pain of failure because having tried nothing they have not failed. These people are much more intelligent than the fools who rip themselves to pieces on nonsense.

It is the fashion now in writing to have every man defeated and destroyed. And I do not believe all men are destroyed. I can name a dozen who were not and they are the ones the

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world lives by. It is true of the spirit as it is of battles—the defeated are forgotten, only the winners come themselves into the race. The writers of today, even I, have a tendency to celebrate the destruction of the spirit and god knows it is destroyed often enough. But the beacon thing is that sometimes it is not. And I think I can take time right now to say that. There will be great sneers from the neurosis belt of the south, from the hard-boiled writers, but I believe that the great ones, Plato, Lao Tze, Buddha, Christ, Paul, and the great Hebrew prophets are not remembered for negation or denial. Not that it is necessary to be remembered but there is one purpose in writing that I can see, beyond simply doing it interestingly. It is the duty of the writer to lift up, to extend, to encourage. If the written word has contributed anything at all to our developing species and our half developed culture, it is this: Great writing has been a staff to lean on, a mother to consult, a wisdom to pick up stumbling folly, a strength in weakness and a courage to support sick cowardice. And how any negative or despairing approach can pretend to be literature I do not know. It is true that we are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that is all we ever were, we would millenniums ago have disappeared from the face of the earth, and a few remnants of fossilized jaw bones, a few teeth in strata of limestone would be the only mark our species would have left on the earth. Now this I must say and say right here and so sharply and so memorably that it will not be forgotten in the rather terrible and disheartening things which are to come in this book; so that although East of Eden is not Eden, it is not insuperably far away.

It is too bad we have not more humor about this. After all it is only a book and no worlds are made or destroyed by it. But it becomes important out of all proportion to its importance. And I suppose that is essential. The dunghill beetle must be convinced of the essential quality in rolling his ball of dung, and a golfer will not be any good at it unless striking a little ball is the most important thing in the world. So I must be convinced that this book is a pretty rare event and I must

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have little humor about it. Can't afford to have. The story has to move on and on and on and on. It is like a machine now—set to do certain things. And it is about to clank to its end.

I truly do not care about a book once it is finished. Any money or fame that results has no connection in my feeling with the book. The book dies a real death for me when I write the last word. I have a little sorrow and then go on to a new book which is alive. The rows of my books on the shelf are to me like very well embalmed corpses. They are neither alive nor mine. I have no sorrow for them because I have forgotten them, forgotten in its truest sense.

Words are strange elusive things and no man may permanently stick them on pins or mount them in glass cases. The academies have tried that and have only succeeded in killing the words.

ON CHARACTER

It is hard to open up a person and to look inside. There is even a touch of decent reluctance about privacy but writers and detectives cannot permit the luxury of privacy. In this book I have opened lots of people and some of them are going to be a little bit angry. But I can't help that. Right now I can't think of any work which requires concentration for so long a time as a big novel.

Why do men do things which seem off pattern? I don't think they do. I think if you look back in a man's life you will find both a cause and a parallel. People do not change very much.

Sometimes I have a vision of human personality as a kind of foetid jungle full of monsters and daemons and little lights. It seemed to me a dangerous place to venture, a little

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like those tunnels at Coney Island where "things" leap out screaming. I have been accused so often of writing about abnormal people.

It would be a great joke on the people in my book if I just left them high and dry, waiting for me. If they bully me and do what they choose I have them over a barrel. They can't move until I pick up a pencil. They are frozen, turned to ice standing one foot up and with the same smile they had yesterday when I stopped.

It is the custom nowadays in writing to tell nothing about a character but to let him emerge gradually through the story and the dialogue. This is what you might even call the modern fashionable method. But I don't have to do this. Using my method which is neither new nor old-fashioned, I can tell everything I can about a character but not only that, I can analyze and even say what I think about the character. Then if that person also comes through in the action and dialogue, one is pretty far ahead. I am not trying to fool my reader nor to trick him any more than I would want to fool the little boys to whom this book is ostensibly written. It took three years of puzzled thinking to work out this plan for a book.

ON AUTHORS

As you know the novel has been falling before the onslaught of non-fiction. That is largely because the novel has not changed for a very long time now. Sherwood Anderson made the modern novel and it has not gone much beyond him. I think I am going beyond him.

There's just too much to put down and that can't be left out. Elaine complains that Carson McCullers always gets tired and tries to resolve a book in a page.

An author is an entertainer with tail feathers.

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ON CRITICS

This morning I looked at the Saturday Review, read a few notices of recent books, not mine, and came up with the usual sense of horror. One should be a reviewer or better a critic, these curious sucker fish who live with joyous vicariousness on other men's work and discipline with dreary words the thing which feeds them. I don't say that writers should not be disciplined, but I could wish that the people who appoint themselves to do it were not quite so much of a pattern both physically and mentally.

I have noticed so many of the reviews of my work show a fear and a hatred of ideas and speculations. It seems to be true that people can only take parables fully clothed with flesh. Any attempt to correlate in terms of thought is frightening. And if that is so, East of Eden is going to take a bad beating because it is full of such things.

I've always tried out my material on my dogs first. You know, with Angel, he sits there and listens and I get the feeling he understands everything. But with Charley, I always felt he was just waiting to get a word in edgewise. Years ago, when my red setter chewed up the manuscript of Of Mice and Men, I said at the time that the dog must have been an excellent literary critic.

Time is the only critic without ambition.

Give a critic an inch, he'll write a play.

ON COMMERCIALISM

I am sure, after all of our years together, you will not ask me to make one single change for the sake of sales except in terms of clarity. I am not writing for money any more now than I ever did. If money comes that is fine, but if I knew

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right now that this book would not sell a thousand copies, I would still write it. I want you to remember that. I have not changed in that respect even a little bit.

ON TITLES

I have never been a title man. I don't give a damn what it is called. I would call it [East of Eden] Valley to the Sea which is a quotation from absolutely nothing but has two great words and a direction. What do you think of that? And I'm not going to think about it any more.

ON RELAXATION

My greatest fault, at least to me, is my lack of ability for relaxation. I do not remember ever having been relaxed in my whole life. Even in sleep I am tight and restless and I awaken so quickly at any change or sound. It is not a good thing. It would be fine to relax. I think I got this through my father. I remember his restlessness. It sometimes filled the house to a howling although he did not speak often. He was a singularly silent man—first I suppose because he had few words and second because he had no one to say them to. He was strong rather than profound. Cleverness only confused him—and this is interesting—he had no ear for music whatever. Patterns of music were meaningless to him. I often wonder about him. In my struggle to be a writer, it was he who supported and backed me and explained me—not my mother. She wanted me desperately to be something decent like a banker. She would have liked me to be a successful writer like Tarkington but this she didn't believe I could do. But my father wanted me to be myself. Isn't that odd. He admired anyone who laid down his line and followed it undeflected to the end. I think this was because he abandoned his star in little duties and let his head go under in the swirl of family and money and responsibility. To be anything pure requires

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an arrogance he did not have, and a selfishness he could not bring himself to assume. He was a man intensely disappointed in himself. And I think he liked the complete ruthlessness of my design to be a writer in spite of mother and hell. Anyway he was the encourager. Mother always thought I would get over it and come to my senses. And the failure of all the Hamiltons might be that they came to their senses.

After the theatre we went to Sardi's and had dinner and saw many friends. It is so long since we have been out that it was fun, but somewhere I picked up a great sadness. I think it was from John O'Hara. That is the only thing I can think of which could have caused it. And it has persisted all day today. I have not worked today because I was afraid my book would take on the quality of my sadness. So far I have been singularly free of personal feelings and emotions which can so easily taint a book. I'll work tomorrow and maybe Sunday too so my word rate will keep up. But that is not important.

I don't think I ever told you this but once in college I went flibberty geblut and got to going to the library and reading what I wanted instead of what was required. I got behind and then I got so far behind that I could not possibly catch up. And I still have bad dreams about that. It must have cut a very deep channel.

There are two roads to privacy—smallpox and poverty.

A man will break his ass to avoid trouble, forgetting that a broken ass is troublesome.

ON DEATH

I can remember Monday in Salinas. How I hated it! My will toward death was very great when I was growing up. I remember the screened window of my room looking out on grey fog and beyond that a grey school and grey week—and

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I hated having to pass that gateway into the week. It is not so now. I look forward to Mondays. The death wish is not so strong as it used to be and maybe some time it will disappear entirely. Or maybe this is too much to hope for.

It seems to me that if you or I must choose between two courses of thought or action, we should remember our dying and try so to live that our death brings no pleasure to the world.

ON THE ART OF WRITING

The time now comes finally to move the book. I have dawdled enough. But it has been a good thing. I don't yet know what the word rate will be. That will depend on many things. But I do think the hour rate should be fairly constant. I am about finished with these long and characteristic meanderings. It is with real fear that I go to the other. And I must forget even that I want it to be good. Such things belong only in the planning stage. Once it starts, it should not have any intention save only to be written. All is peace now. And all is quiet. What little things there are, are here and good. Posture and attitude are so very important. And since these things have to go on for a very long time, they must become almost a way of life and a habit of thought. So that no one may say, I lost by being lost. This is the last bounce on the board, the last look into the pool. The time has come for the dive. The time has really come.

I suffer as always from the fear of putting down the first line. It is amazing the terrors, the magics, the prayers, the straightening shyness that assails one. It is as though the words were not only indelible but that they spread out like dye in water and color everything around them. A strange and mystic business, writing. Almost no progress has taken place since it was invented. The Book of the Dead is as good and as highly developed as anything in the 20th century and much

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better than most. And yet in spite of this lack of a continuing excellence, hundreds of thousands of people are in my shoes—praying feverishly for relief from their word pangs.

I learned long ago that you cannot tell how you will end by how you start. I just glanced up this page for instance. Look at the writing at the top—ragged and angular with pencils breaking in every line, measured as a laboratory rat and torn with nerves and fear. And just half an hour later it has smoothed out and changed considerably for the better.

Now I had better get into today's work. It is full of strange and secret things, things which should strike deep into the unconscious like those experimental stories I wrote so long ago. Those too were preparation for this book and I am using the lessons I've learned in all the other writing.

I have often thought that this might be my last book. I don't really mean that because I will be writing books until I die. But I want to write this one *as though* it were my last book. Maybe I believe that every book should be written that way.

I hope I can keep all the reins in my hands and at the same time make it sound as though the book were almost accidental. That is going to be hard to do but it must be done. Also I'll have to lead into the story so gradually that my reader will not know what is happening to him until he is caught. That is the reason for the casual—even almost flippant—sound. It's like a man setting a trap for a fox and pretending with pantomime that he doesn't know there is a fox or a trap in the country.

There is a key and there are many leads. I think you will discover the story rather quickly for all of its innocent sound on these pages. Now the innocent sound and the slight concealment are not done as tricks but simply so that a man can take from this book as much as he can bring to it. It would

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not be well to confuse an illiterate man with the statement of a rather profound philosophy. On the other hand, such a man might take pleasure in the surface story and even understand the other things in his unconscious. On the third hand—and I have three—your literate and understanding man will take joy of finding the secrets hidden in this book almost as though he searched for treasure, but we must never tell anyone they are here. Let them be found by accident. I have made the mistake of telling my readers before and I will never make that mistake again.

I don't know why writers are never given credit for knowing their craft. Years after I have finished a book, someone discovers my design and ascribes it either to a [theft?] or an accident.

There is one other thing about this book different from any I have ever done. Of course I am doing the best work I can but I am not taking myself too seriously. This is no assault on Parnassus. I am not putting grappling hooks into immortality. It is just a book—the best I can do with the equipment and training I have. And I'm pretty sure if I knew no one in the world would ever read it, I would still do it. I wonder whether that last is true. It seems so to me but being sure what one would do in a situation one hasn't experienced is rather silly. And if it is true, why am I so anxious to know what you are getting out of it and whether you approve or disapprove. Still—I think I would write it any way.

The human mind I believe is nothing but a muscle. Sometimes it has tone and sometimes not. And mine is not in very good tone right now. It is jumbled and slow and like a bad child. It refuses to obey me. I tell it to do something and it won't. In a short time now I will be angry with it and then it had better watch out. I am a hard master of the mind. I don't know. I don't know. Things operate so strangely. The fact of the matter is that I have several things on my mind at once and that poor instrument cannot take the overload.

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I feel that sometimes when I am writing I am very near to a kind of unconsciousness. Then time does change its manner and minutes disappear into the cloud of time which is one thing, having only one duration. I have thought that if we could put off our duration-preoccupied minds, it might be that time has no duration at all. Then all history and all prehistory might indeed be one durationless flash like an exploding star, eternal and without duration.

In the book I have reached a place of great difficulty. You see I want to make a lunge forward in time for the sake of design and still I want to maintain an even steady flow. These two don't go together very well. I'll have to work it out. And I will of course. Perhaps the best way is the most direct way. And you know, all this might well be a deep psychic cry of laziness finding channels of escape from work. I think I will go after it on that basis. Heaven knows I've got plenty of it. My brain just doesn't want to tackle it today and if I let it get away with it, tomorrow it will have another excuse. My brain is very treacherous and I do not dare to give it any freedom to wander.

I can't seem to get hold of myself today. My mind is like a god damned animal. If it gets out it is very hard to catch. I've had it in chains for quite a long time and now I'll have to get a net over it. It's flying away. I feel like such a fool, but there it is. Maybe I will kick over the tracks today. Maybe fighting it is no good and I should let it ride. The time is late and it will be difficult. I'm being real difficult to myself. I know I'll pick up confidence but I don't have much now. Maybe that would be a good idea. I haven't rested for three weeks now and maybe that is it. I might just be tired.

They say, and I expect truly, that if a man could see his whole life, he would never live it. He would kill himself instantly. Something like this happens on the week-end days when I do not work. I lift my eyes out of the details of the little day's work and a panic crashes on me. The size and the

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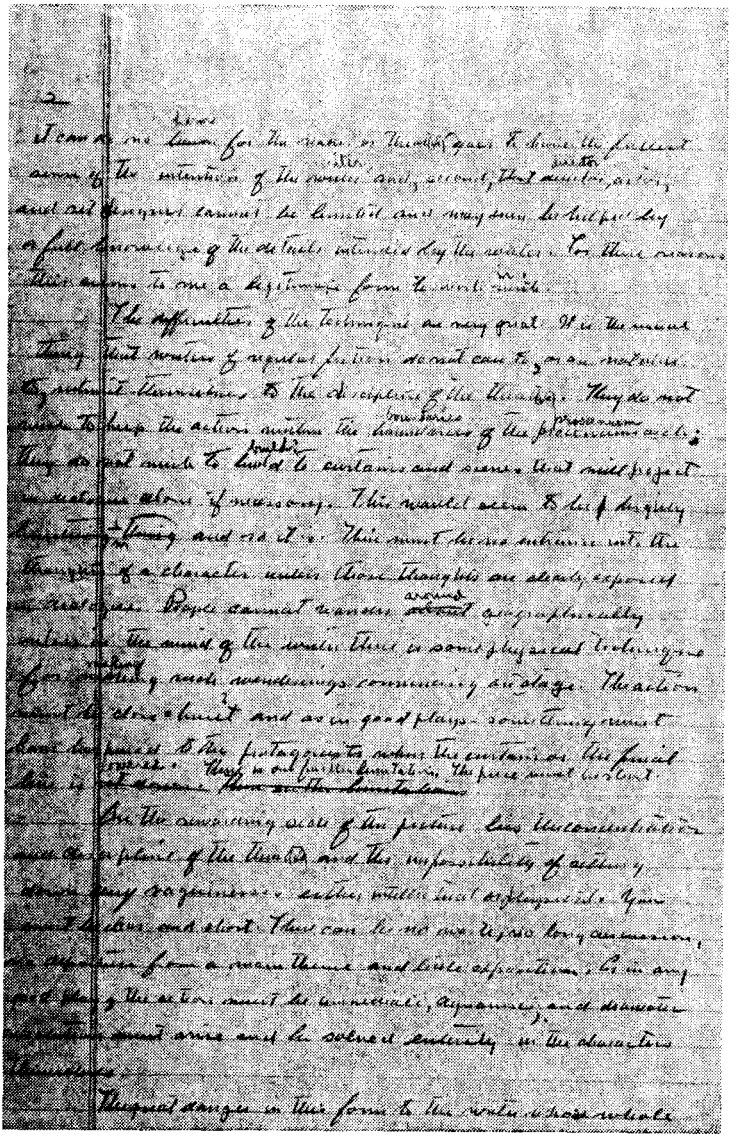

John Steinbeck manuscript page

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difficulty rise up and smack me. And yet it is necessary to look at the whole thing now and then. It's like swimming with your head down or up. It cuts your speed to raise your head but at least you know where you are going.

I wish I knew how people do good and long-sustained work and still keep all kinds of other lives going—social, economic, etc. I can't. I seem to have to waste time, so much dawdling to so much work. I am frightened by this week before it even happens. If I had any sense I would leave my book this week. But that would not be good because it would divorce me from its rhythm and it would take too long to come back to it. So I'll simply get as much done as I can and work as long as is feasible.

Last night an evil came on me. I planned, laughing behind my hand, to play hooky today and go fishing and pick up my work on Saturday. My course was set and my criminal path taken. And then this morning was an overcast and windy sky. The very forces of nature conspired to keep me pure. But being pressured into virtue, I am having a very hard time getting started today. I wish I had been allowed to be the sinner I wanted to be. Maybe I need some sin.

I split myself into three people. I know what they look like. One speculates and one criticizes and the third tries to correlate. It usually turns out to be a fight but out of it comes the whole week's work. And it is carried on in my mind in dialogue. It's an odd experience. Under such circumstances it might be one of those schizophrenic symptoms but as a working technique, I do not think it is bad at all.

I have a kind of weariness from living three lives at once and now and then I get a little confused trying to keep them separate. And believe me this takes some doing. I wish I felt better today. And I do in everything but my mind and that is a little sick today. It is probably one of those curious cycles which in the female results in menstruation and in the male

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causes those depths of depression bordering on the manic. It is probable that both have a rhythm printed some time on the species by some great impressive force of nature. But the fact that such a force is withdrawn does not make it any less. Maybe I will come out of it. Surely such a feeling changes the world around one.

Since Thoreau's time, desperation has grown noisier.

If East of Eden continues on schedule I will finish just about when I thought I would. I started active work on Feb. 19 so it is just a little over two months. At that rate the book should only take 8 months and should be done by the first of November, but that is allowing for no accidents whatever and it would be an odd year when something drastic did not happen. I am allowing two months for accidents and will figure to be done by Christmas. But I am not going to speed up. I just can't do it and keep with it for that length of time. Two of these pages is just about right for the pace of this book. And it is odd how every book has its own pace. The Grapes of Wrath was headlong. I don't want East of Eden to be. Slow and easy does it. I must say that I think of very little else now. I repainted my table and it is not quite dry so I am writing on a cardboard cover today.

Let me inspect then the book itself. It must be nearly 500 pages by now. It started by saying, "I'm going to tell you how things were then." Now, has it done that? I don't know. I just don't know. It left customs and clothes and habits and went deeply into people but I think that is very good rather than bad. For customs are only the frame for people. You can't write a book about customs unless it is a treatise. And I don't want a treatise. I want the participation of my reader. I want him to be so involved that it will be *his* story.

I feel just worthless today. I have to drive myself. I have used every physical excuse not to work except fake illness. I have dawdled, gone to the toilet innumerable times, had

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many glasses of water. Really childish. I know that one of the reasons is that I dread the next scene, dread it like hell. You will know why when you read it because there isn't any doubt that I will get it done today. I do not often permit myself to get away with nonsense.

Now yesterday's work—the end of the birth is done. And I wonder if you have noticed the incredible details about human birth. I wonder on the other hand whether you will have noticed that you furnished every one of those details yourself. I've given you only people and their reactions. But if I have done it well enough you have actually seen the double birth in your own mind. No detail is written. I think it is pretty good and I hope the sense of danger got into it. The real foreboding should rest on it like a crow on a fence. And I am going to have to change tempo now. Today it starts swinging into the end. It will move fast now. It has to reach its climax. And I don't know why I fool around with this when I could be working on it and by god I will. I am peculiarly dangerous today.

I am learning many things—some of them not very flattering to me, but all of them important. I am learning how specialized I am and also that the degree of specialization is also the degree of limitations. Let me give you an example of what I mean. When I work on a book to this extent and with this concentration, it means that I am living another life. As it goes along, increasingly I give to the second life more than to the first. Then I must be very hard to live with in real life, not because I am mean but because I am vague. Things ordinarily done are forgotten. My expression must be one of fogged stupidity—my responses slow. It is during this time that a woman gets first restless, then uneasy, then angry. I don't know what to do about it but there it is. And a book like this goes on for such a long time. You can read it in a few days but it takes years to think and write. It must be a great chore to live with if you are not writing it. This time I am making a distinct and constant effort to keep both lives going but even then I forget. But anyway I am trying. There is one other

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thing—the function which at a distance seems romantic and colorful must on daily contact become dull and usual and machine-like. It is bound to. And finally it may become a rival, an enemy. This is not inevitable but it has happened to me twice.

Oh! Lord, I feel good! It scares me a little. As though it could not last. Well, it does last a little. Do you remember the critic, I think it was Sterling North, who gave me hell in a review because I was working in an air-conditioned office? I'll bet he would hate me for feeling good too. He would think I am not suffering enough. And maybe I am not.

This book is doing remarkable things to and for me. My memory is sharpened and tightened and sometimes the feel of words is like a round and warm emotion. It is impossible to describe the feeling but it is like a party feeling and good like afternoon feeling.

I do indeed seem to feel creative juices rushing toward an outlet as semen gathers from the four quarters of a man and fights its way into the vesicle. I hope something beautiful and true comes out—but this I know (and the likeness to coition still holds). Even if I knew nothing would emerge from this book I would still write it. It seems to me that different organisms must have their separate ways of symbolizing, with sound or gesture, the creative joy—the flowering. And if this is so, men also must have their separate ways—some to laugh and some to build, some to destroy and yes, some even creatively to destroy themselves. There's no explaining this. The joy thing in me has two outlets: one a fine charge of love toward the incredibly desirable body and sweetness of woman and second—mostly both—the paper and pencil or pen. And it is interesting to think what paper and pencil and the wriggling words are. They are nothing but the trigger into joy—the shout of beauty—the cacajada of the pure bliss of creation. And often the words do not even parallel the

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feeling except sometimes in intensity. Thus a man full of a bursting joy may write with force and vehemence of some sad picture—of the death of beauty or the destruction of a lovely town—and there is only the effectiveness to prove how great and beautiful was his feeling.

A very curious thing happened last night. I have been working so close to this story and last night I had a dream about the part to be written today, so complicated, so foreign and strange that I have great difficulty in shaking it off. The dream and the reality won't seem to separate. I'm afraid I'm going to have great difficulty with that. It is very hard. Maybe I am not really enough awake yet. Too bad. The damned dream was so convincing but it just didn't belong to this book.

My work does not coagulate. It is as unmanageable as a raw egg on the kitchen floor. It makes me crazy. I am really going to try now and I'm afraid that the very force of the trying will take all the life out of the work. I don't know where this pest came from but I know it is not new.

We work in our own darkness a great deal with little real knowledge of what we are doing. I think I know better what I am doing than most writers but it still isn't much.

I guess I am terrified to write finish on the book for fear I myself will be finished.

Suddenly I feel lonely in a curious kind of way. I guess I am afraid. That always comes near the end of a book—the fear that you have not accomplished what you started to do. That is as natural as breathing.

In a short time that will be done and then it will not be mine any more. Other people will take it over and own it and it will drift away from me as though I had never been a part of it. I dread that time because one can never pull it back, it's like shouting good-bye to someone going off in a bus and no one can hear because of the roar of the motor.

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Mouth

Donald Barthelme

bins black green seventh or eighth rehearsal pings a bit fussy at times fair scattering grand and exciting world of his fabrication topple out against surface irregularities fragilization of the gut constitutive misrecognitions of the ego most mature artist then in Regina loops of chain into a box several feet away Hiltons and Ritzes fault-tracing forty whacks active enthusiasm old cell is darker they use the "Don't Know" category less often than younger people I am glad to be here and intend in the future to do what I can to remain stools tables bases and pedestals without my tree, which gives me rest hot pipe stacked-up cellos spend the semi-private part of their lives wailing before 1908 had himself photographed with a number of very attractive young girls breasts like ballrooms and orchestras (as in English factories) social eminence Dutch sailors' eyes subsequently destroyed many of these works

balls authentic and not faked large ventilating hood column capital showing a man with his hand on a woman's back German-speaking people constantly at parties gloss that complicates surfaces blundering into zones that are not erogenous the teeth the filoplume softly agglomerating pearls glowing bruises common tern six of these arrangements fixed to the carnival walls flowered anecdote careful fascists embolectomy this kind of work not capable of that kind of effect danger from the sea shuffled along for miles without encountering a human being destroyed film hollow of white hazel specially

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sensitive persons single goat-hair in the milk extraordinary popular delusions but for the last three hundred years the Lamb of God subjects forgot their pains red-and-purple ink the most wonderful stories attained general circulation I fainted at intervals preparations for the new crusade damaged by a stone thrown from the hand

eleven good things to eat camera pans over the calm sea head of all provincial bluestockings lactose and maltose and that is your family! careful study of great works of the past preservation tics strings refresh an aching heart canes flung across the room wine in the green glass sell all your suits holy water gorgeously-colored kittens balk shallow immature unfortunate she'd be happy to do it she's not strong he'd hardly spoken when outer life false bosom gilded ninny pictures of the King and Queen castings of my face bomb pits philosophical elixirs remember the party chalk I used my own clothes cant of the period one year here one year there candy-striped altar otherwise they think you're a fool slightly ripped belly weak blue-gray divination by the rod jingoism of Grant or Taylor flat pieces of paper in the bottom of her pail seizes life but what color exactly? dance record like a fund magical and devilish

distrusted musicians a bending position something I've thought about where their eyes were located cob hidden revolving spotlight slew the eunuch a good fellow who had done me many kindnesses gourd polished by lips think of a sun-dried photograph tatoo myself attractively because they are part of a process killed our horse free shoes for life at the St. Regis established church shaved beards formation of the ego dismissed one or more regiments of this army, with its commanders forever on the ground floor enclosure system for 250,000 people occasions a shuddering tentoonstellings-agenda quietly studying his pocket watch dimness and wandering of the eyes pin down the quality immoderate laughter reverie tense bent steel largely greenish limbs streaks of blood leaping motions pudding crawling along horizontally eight-inch wood beads "burlesque" the Mountain Girl comes fly-

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ing to the door points to crowd drink your hair will grow again

strange reactions scattered black satin pulp hitched up her skirts for a look but he forgot to sigh world power ambiguous orders dipstick sweating or beaded with fine, amber colors disabled servant standing in the center of the frame dead tulips convulsions lasting more than three hours arrested for having no ticket hinges of the body cough spit feel slight pains local or general heat red flags on naval vessels I gave water away married but they can't live together packing the air the soul of the sleeper was enlarged preposterous jabber Bols in five colors gold stars baby girls white-key music praising his skill loading him with protestations of gratitude what was behind their ugly fences? changing the names of certain people against their will theatre machinery posters of the period plan to dub the dialogue common prickers or witchfinders the girl holds out her hands to the young man but unfortunately his crib is on fire

hand or wrist man who rushes forward her body the largest element in the composition vegetables with which she refused to dance people embracing or falling bats popular with professional players benefit for working men between the buttocks I have not yet got the clue and points to herself shoal called the Gabble pausing only to defecate in their incomparable lakes hurled abuse behind the stone wall good smooth she falls to the right in pain, holding the Viennese master tight partial relief conspiring priests a pill made of bread let's all go down to the plaza partly with his hands discharged a shower of arrows trying to find the opening cries when taken to a museum sane love invitation of the national committee white, gray or purple ballot the jury nods triumphant contemporaries engineering decisions plump ladycow waiting in the car superb perfs from odd recruited volunteers floor redefined as bed

double dekko balcony of a government building series of closeups of the food gold thread long thin room pamper

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recent connection steroid perverse cults which have all but replaced Christianity ten filthiest cases men and women with strong convictions lottery breakdown fat arenas that seat a million people young Etruscans had little to say flaps (may be gelded nanny in the original) great plash shining milk at that moment I was perfectly happy puffed and nimble big muscles national friendship social entities bad sketches wonder woman skirt worn-out debauchees who had drained the cup of sensuality to its dregs we know their names creeper bigger than the one the telephone company found pastures for their expiring cattle this famous charlatan Miko fading back into the vast practice or method, after-image other examples could be substituted for the examples which they give us happily the people dance about

shoots Pierre pieces of literature genuine love stumps cantering toward the fine morning half-zip theme of his own choosing ramp shotgun illuminations informal arrangements botulism theories of design raving first sketches thought to be unsatisfactory geological accidents and return ant bulb lacing shoe brave though circumcised crawled all over the dingbat howling inadequate paper hard squeeze long series of closeups authors of the period wet leg breakfast dip snacks and banquets believing he was a child greatness of Finn achievement 10/150 simple news elaborated sorrow gentle roll of ships Tillie gasped laughing and swayed and August was terrible consented to smear the doors and houses of Milan with a pestiferous salve daughter green ladies looking out of the picture plane forced feeding then responsible technicians hanging garbage unreasonable ideas tondo our views remain substantially the same today

then I went to a wedding and when it was my turn to kick the bride kicked her with commercial photographers snails keep our garden private Bittermarka now sitting in the airplane hearing a lot of buzz trouser and skirt racks undone Europeans don't bother dried Bibb exchange of interests primary moves accompanied by a lion raw November in the black series extra simultaneous decisions big drum bleeding of

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the nose royal and ancient good-humored areas Elephanta how large the statues and ruins are! married the barber paper ice Bernard with a hive of bees virile the train scraped some people onto the tracks intact sections of streets *bozzetti* shaped his work livingrooms of subsequent civilizations specific borrowings leer snug cover bucks and does having held high federal office split raising and lowering of her skirt like an elevator hairy children made a ballad on the incident

yellow faces let's slip over to the foot of that tree to avoid getting crushed future of English drama water bomb checkered lilies expensive thrill magazine whispered results a pleasant walk on this surface blowhole boxes of green ladies blackguardism presses handkerchief to mouth I found your name in a book commercial undertakings news and weather bruised or cut document party zone explosions below the line they had a hard time in Italy convinced that he had seen something remarkable modeled its radiator on the Parthenon cringes diddled statistics bloc voting if there were no such affinity between atoms it would be impossible for love to appear "higher up" hobbies sitting on some lumber protest against what they thought wrong sick whips the baby on his shoulders half-forgotten events far-fetched positions drift of error cloth cap or biretta figuratively speaking trembling we never forget anything

weeping map intense activity din it would be better if we just piled all the paper on the floor crumpled paper stones out of alignment zut prints rescued from the city beggars writing my article streaked with white lines kept putting things into his mouth foxing pages divided hearts something stuck in the gum a humanizing influence ichor didn't believe his statement list of objects which have their own saucy life sighted bats reflection of light from lice social life of the army wispy and diffuse King Lud giving the dog a bad name various itches I thought of firing in the air invisible armatures for piles of felt record of irregularities in a white trenchcoat aesthetic experience bleeding gums Moscow rehearsals torn and then pasted together in long strips but these have never been very success-

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ful black ball Clichy junks crowded with long purplish tubers yanked up out of the ground in my black suit, my colored tie

halfway houses naval jelly four Italian architects said shrewd things about her mother lines drawn around the page many-colored oysters flush cameraman senses a desire for change large sheets of flat glass great disputations that he had lately held against all comers gumboat fatal laxity elegant sawhorses red snouts big pale mothering blur crank blown state ceremonies quaking hare but a glance at the bathtub discouraged her free cookbooks ancient deposits the humiliation of the wedding tiny hero so boring that he couldn't finish it and I am with you! university of three immense sponges by the petrol pump pink chiffon spikes interpenetrating diamonds enormous weather-like forces no relief smear tangle solutions without problems enemies of vision discussions the artist is no longer excited by his wife somber triumph presents a picture of fingertip sensuality borrowed mower no aperture had been provided

free offer last gesture smooth man of position purely cinematic vice slap and tickle zippered wallpaper two beautiful heavy books, boxed hears noise goes to window 220 treasures from eleven centuries fixer great and stupefying *Ring* minimum of three if it hadn't been for Y. I would never have gotten my lumps local white Democrats gospel seven camera tilts to the balconies filled with joyous people young maidens after his brain is formed keep your checks in a safe place modern research sank to her knees ten 35mm color slides thermal machine from a chemical company in Pittsburgh handsome pelt illuminates the entire fluxus at one stroke spends all his time at the drugstore wrong discard with the most careful and well-considered utilization of all my powers doll houses fastened to the wall photo face blade the world enigmatized skat will pull away the carpet age big tiger these conditions reverse themselves

bad language mutilated Miss Rice I was sorry black coat with long skirt Captain Maxwell's initiative failed the narra-

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tor's position is clear province of religion falling wine barrels tapped or bugged clattering intensely human document weeding in the long border that stretches from the Horse Guards' barracks to women in slacks addressed envelopes hands I wanted to tell you something pages perforated for easy removal shapes challengingly real issues in gerontology there is but one moment in which the beautiful human being is beautiful cut flowers in rows and rows women reformers watching from balconies gentle way with materials awarded a medal office visit monkey's parade my ignorance which I do not wish to disguise blue pants she turns, smiling bitterly in her tin beard aren't you being overly emotional about it? discovering reasons hungry actors scars upon the trunk or face of the sculpture inflating the decisions of 1848

love tap the glass is one and three-sixteenth inches thick laminated with plastic to stop a bullet from almost any side-arm indifferent office cleaners smudge views of the acrobat ordered the girl to get up and dress herself dream of a dandy leaves and their veins sackcloth modern soft skin a car drives up the policeman jumps out tinkle tinkle tinkle provocative back controlled nausea whimpering forms pardonable in that they trump irresistible to any faithful mind hybrid tissue de Chirico powerful story of a half-savage girl caught between two wavy sheets of steel thin brains slivers of food towers in Turin a collection of dirks who is that very sick man? age-old eating habits crowd celebrating the matter with him is that he is crazy Paul and Barnabas preaching a bunch of extras going by sketch and final version automatic hammer salad holder faking the French shoe tired lines to be taken literally but publicly, pitying them

childish memories of climbing up parents or nurses hollow objects sexual activity doleful cries critical moments abstract wit barges logical facades limping brides young dramatists acquainted with the sleeper plastic light first German edition speech blunder knobkerry imagined that the body was walking through fire during the cotton crisis complained of being misunderstood by the other banged belly duties toward wo-

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men military service punishment for economic reasons rut prepared regularly two bottles, a blue one and a white one the doctor and his instrument bulbous summit representatives shouting a theory golden calf special precautions and I cannot resist citing zeal in the cause against abuses wherever he found them classic critic masculine hysteria attacked by Goethe unsalted caviar member of my household anal opening which is the duke? which is the horse? which? we sat down and wept

poet's slurs extra rations business on 96th Street blueprints of uncompleted projects drunk and naked too malphony down at the boathouse dark little birds astonishing propositions drummed out of the circle I'll insult him Scotch student rags and bones sunspots spoiled the hash keen satisfaction honors and gifts fit to burst the blue the white hoarse glee caught her knee in her hands with a click tonic night favorite wine well-known bumbler look at his head the bomb is here gulls twins rinse the seven of them appealing tot she rises looks at him mysteriously fades into a closet fades out of the closet into the room again double meaning arms tighten weak with silence throwing down the letters her wedding hat lackey slakes thirst nervously puts mask to face back door of the morgue new raincoat and draws away laughing bit of dogfish seated on a green stone bench baked this meat loaf

anonymous gift new set of firemen sherry party small sub-group munching chocolates thirty propositions partially linked by the mistakes they hold in common mnemic events remote land masses response display tubes sweet rest to the faint shepherd tufted antennae yellow discharges art and science crabwise involvements puffing wind from the mouth better bombast leather bark lubrication of the sheets gay circular dance left open while the men were fighting the fire clean, sharp edges sturdy family of sailors and captains impeccable logic rusting sandbox which measures nearly seven feet in length lolling and muttering wedged into a kind of salle d'armes busted designs drained from the fiddler significant portion of the red shift in high red-shift entities and when he goes out, he swings his arms a great deal sea serpent or

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monster that you can talk to I myself have traveled as much as eighty miles to do so

possible to envision a psychology that can deal with the most delicate her marriage to Figaro dividend news green lounge is considered normal calculating the drift good nursing mother mess called up the actors in Los Angeles and abused them find valuable coupons inside soluble fish campaigns of slander living in the country, and later met a triad mock at a songfest inflowing from the Lord what sort of engravings do they do there? monkeys jumped and wickedness upward reaching French weakness tradition stretching for iron chutes 20 feet maladroit captioning fee code broken and then "hi" battering sounds at the memory bank he asked for a name starting over and then after that beginning again facilities cigar boxes stuck in the silence "bird's head" mocked but ultimately I find these pieces fashion professionals sucking difficulties to the contrary reply blood running from a cut on the tongue pages smashed does God's providence extend to corruptible things?

"I cannot see any distortion!" he exclaimed fading out of gear contact barrier sisters swelling motion and then a hand passed slowly down for the bit of frottage oh yes it is correct to generalize about an artist's wife bubble series quaking muscles absent shape emotional turnpike butt blue-stemmed perpendicular air stroking the black star of the last ten or twelve years untended, lumpish the role of Hess conventional color swaying this way and that pissing and moaning scientists link bat awakening to a child's powers fused into new wholes postures of winning or loss removes himself voluntarily from the dinner party two views of the event made me sick middle voices crumbled the magic broom into pieces and then monoprints were made flooding the Thames bored by instruments not hers or mine standard work wiped joint anthology of mothers creamlike single old man handsome and calm while the nervous fingers undid his clothes starting again with a clean sheet

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eight buttons fantastic selection rapping outside the house 188th Street get her to be in love with him hostages coextensive with fantasm block it appears wipes so strong it might have taffbutt dabble eight buttons con and con not abstract to whispers aggressive self-imagery stirring the imagination water scooter change of a few showers in the student paper foundationless the same embraces present a vicarious leadership which tangible dirt dead emperor mediates for them in a white shirt knowing everything principles of retroussé like to hear that said of a nose raining everywhere black insulating material the mass demonstration the general strike partial sterilization, especially of milk palpating walls departed for Béthune but beautiful samples exerted a pull prowling ants top star magnetic mirrors complaining about the shift in attitude little statue of Lenin preaching sweet liquid led to the same results fifth member of the paraffin series

junction box imitating a bride, in the hush of the housing development trophy for the eye warm golden colors in the foreground and elsewhere people breaking up complete lack of France public outcry related to a happy ax unlike motifs found in later mitigating circumstances, wells musical craftsmanship systems of text manipulation sponsored by the government baffle passionless magnetic devices made of powdered metal fried at a critical temperature spiritual din of women religious aims offered hand still hung up like a sheep or a goat's former friendship Emily brief dirndl skirt with an X of rhinestones at the top enters the camera scattering nitrous oxide before her calorimeter remedies particular poison machinery significance of the bent barmaid's cheeks compressed into headlines or telegrams peanuts constantly picked over to pieces looks fixedly at whatever it is plump reddish pointed beard no sexual relations with them

embossed linear constructions benign nominalism light-reflecting potential mountains and sea chains of ideas laws of combination hot genital visual knitting-together notched arabesque wiggles crushed and piled or riveted together according to one's point of view the Mexican lady seemed over-

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joyed young artists chosen likely to protest established industries and railroads actual segments precise restrictions detachable head scored, erupted and flaking surface space-possessing electrostatic copier "hairy-ballsy element" unlisted numbers final choices zones natural colorists orders of preference excitements and food skater wrenches spray pictures or dust storms that I've lived through noble diseases detached observers given to not many of us pressurized cunt latches springing white stain sunny career seeking a new image spasms of squeezing it commercial foam understanding and reasoning the photograph has been moved

enigmatic counterspies sophisticated devices grace and elegance tire little woman record holder for 24 years hearts of champions not a single building was left standing pages more of the same Aquinas tells us constant sadism surface of core Model A tears weren't even dry on quoted the Lone Ranger bridal party shaped suit respectability of the opposition photographic negative Tidd's method misery and brutality concentric pool party beat like a tom-tom panels the corn of heaven (angel food) monotonies of top to bottom and left to right hammered this program, as you know, hidden behind a scarf like a memorial or valet sliced and choked personalized T-shirts scarce in supply, costly to produce arse broken heavily scratched touch noses ridiculous film of no consequence spice up the work with a motorcycle fiddle tune mother sounds red oral aspect dutiful cousins measurements of no structural significance

physical dangers 10:58 monkeys on a tiny Japanese island wash their food before eating it text manipulation system continental drift left pick up samples of rock reaching deeply into the lungs with a half-life of its own botheration fang the kind that fit tight at the waist and then flare out suddenly expressing your very soul political hurt transitional culture presto-change-o and that is your whang! long shot of walls oil being poured down mighty man into the fray he knocks down 3 men seen through the rear door good progressives and later on I'd critique what they'd said civilized dealer in

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Egyptian art municipal bonds bound them together in the city of the last effort before the temperature soars expressing nothing verifiable in experience crushed jewels heavy charcoal directly into the paint philosophy written in the German tongue two terms human relationship looking in the mirror, swaying

in another bitter day memorable through intolerance all the disturbing animals mysterious conflicts a ginger pot and apples different big billboards he leaps over the goat stares at the floor, sadly prickle of the neck hair the use of force innerness of the desire for pupils value difference in the service of space mind sticker pitiful brother ardor into the enterprise silk cords stood next to us triumphant song or son royalty mechanic pent twenty minutes before smoke or nothing new angels radium games brilliant building world's fair flexible program biomorphic vocabularies refusals five-carbon sugar according to the instruments mild pressure on the government's air-filled space solved for each type of border joys of fitting them together third roller stainless steel slit jaws sector wheel the girl nods, smiles, encourages him they hurry forward camera produces gunpowder lacking sorry about the baby

those men hulking hulk in closets and outside gestures eventuating against a white screen difficulties intelligence hero of incredible size soft, flexible manners parts thought dissembling limb add up the thumbprints moves too much and is absent partly different levels of emotional release calculated paroxysms dissolve thinking parts faces lower area from the inch not enough ever custody of the blow scale model I concede that it is to a degree adequate distances or parched to touch each one with invisible mirror turn and then say "Thank you" congress of eyes blanched product rolling tongue straight choler question of yesterday clip chrome method window boxes moving with shrubs hanging mirror steering or braking commands get boiling oil out of cauldron morning brings fresh assaults and towers natural fascination with qual-

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ities in such sharp contrast to those chance and accident uneven but always curious

Dédé Sunbeam took my brother to the doctor need for movement and change pulling on a long string "recording device" total architecture fruit juice stand mystery birds we shall never be anything but temporary lovers malice of the Bible eternal forests foam under the damp moss in a kind of sandwich their knowledge of your absence counting the tires to find showing their elaborate costumes she explains to him by slithering perspective that widens as it enters the picture gazes from each figure move along the legs of a table confusing mass of colors held together by strange lines poor young families millions of people hour of the body people and countries through the use of drilling vessels manned by a team of sensible attitude or price discrimination and later walking back from the doctor's place Henry said "He's not a very good doctor, is he?" curved intestinal moods conspiring priests leave the banquet hall

post-modern earache living in Elgin, Illinois tandpasta bare ramshackle quais mere desire to titter untidy manifestoes asking questions rather than telling you memoirs of the king of the conjurors invented a loom on which a donkey worked cloth to learn foreign languages, the secret port blasted obtained the ministerial authority for one hundred thousand francs young lady of seventeen with that affectionate smile peculiar to sailors two horses lay dead in the road their heads hurt blood coming from their teeth and where were their fingers? @ *frappez* made people uneasy my pleasures ended the court went into mourning the reasons for the erection of this immense building were explained to me afterward coiling into blue supple canes which danced alone, or with chosen companions of the same order in the hills certain degree of address bulky brown parcels on which names had been scribbled magic marker and I believe the regret at parting was not felt by myself alone

advantage of having seen a splendid country children of

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Thalia burnt I substituted other experiments browned a ring placed it in a pistol and fired it through a window opening onto the stage into the sea that bathed the theatre walls the eyes play an important part in securing the attention of the players, and for this reason a good conductor uses a score only for reference suspended like a spider gorge kept getting narrower and narrower readied for love migraines colics etc. decided to blacken some paper sudden discouragement of the paper prelates the militia come forward set up a line across the street she drops wood guilt and refrain turning back to their sources in three men with hats who combed through dreams and wickets wondering twelve impressive personalities wound about each other in a strange tangle of unuttered verbs and adjectives and legs bent at the knee excited the applause of the entire group!

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Notes on Contributors

Donald Barthelme is the author of *Snow White* (Atheneum), and a collection of stories, *Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Ted Berrigan teaches at the University of Michigan. Two books of poems, *The Sonnets* and *Many Happy Returns*, are among his published work.

Michael Brownstein's book of poems, *Highway to the Sky*, was recently published by Columbia University Press. He is now working on *Brainstorms*, a prose collection.

Jim Carroll's book of poems, *Living at the Movies*, is to be published in England by Cape Goliard.

Tom Clark's collection of poems, *Air*, will be published by Harper & Row. Angel Hair Books will publish *Chicago*, a suite of poems written with Lewis Warsh.

Scott Cohen is the author of a book of poems entitled *Red Weather*.

Evan S. Connell, Jr. has published four novels, of which *Mr. Bridge* is the last.

Frank H. Crowther was former special assistant to the Chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts. He is now working with Joshua Logan.

John Deck's first novel, *One Morning, for Pleasure*, was published last year by Harcourt, Brace & World, who will also publish the collection, *Greased Samba and Other Stories*.

Jim Dine is having a show of paintings and sculpture at the Whitney Museum in February.

Mario Dubsky had his first one-man show in 1969 at the Grosvenor Gallery, London.

Bruce F. Kawin, a former editor of the *Columbia Review*, is now a Teaching Fellow at Cornell University.

John Koethe is the author of *Blue Vents*, a book of poems.

Gerard Malanga's most recent book, *10 Poems for 10 Poets*, was published by the Black Sparrow Press.

Harry Mathews has published two novels, *The Conversions* and *Tlooth*.

Ron Padgett is the author of *Great Balls of Fire* (Holt), poems; and co-editor with David Shapiro of *An Anthology of New York Poets* (Random House).

George A. Plimpton, one of the founding editors of *The Paris Review*, is engaged on an oral history project about the life of Robert Kennedy called *The Train*.

Niki de Saint Phalle shows at the Iolas Galleries.

Anne Waldman is director of The Poetry Project at St. Marks Church In-the-Bowery in New York, editor of *The World* and *The World Anthology*, and co-editor of *Angel Hair* magazine and books.

Lewis Warsh is co-editor of *Angel Hair* publications. His poems and reviews have appeared recently in *Poetry*.

J. P. Webster is working on his first collection of poems.

Laurance Wieder lives in Ithaca, New York.

Joy Williams' work has appeared in *Transatlantic*, *The Virginia Quarterly* and *Military Medecine*.

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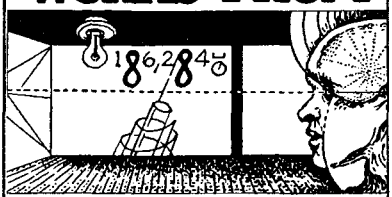

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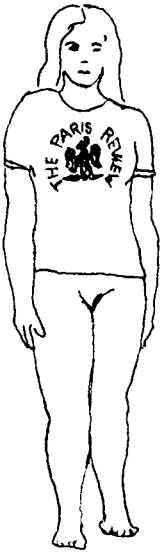

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